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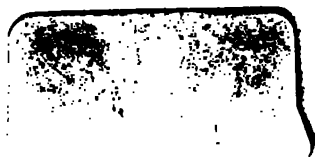
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Fanny Bellamy
her
Mother's
present on her
5th Birthday
August 8th
1831.

1419



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SKETCHES
FROM THE
VOLUME OF CREATION.

" Nature is but the name for an effect,
Whose cause is God."

COWPER.

" He breathes upon the pink,
And gives it odour ; touches the sweet rose,
And makes it glow ; beckons the evening dew,
And sheds it on the lupin, and the pea ;
So, all are passing sweet."

HURDIS.

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SKETCHES
FROM THE
VOLUME OF CREATION,
AS DISPLAYED IN
THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR;
AN
ORIGINAL WORK FOR YOUTH.

BY
THE REV. BOURNE HALL DRAPER;
AUTHOR OF
"SCRIPTURE STORIES FROM THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT," &c.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD AND STEEL.

LONDON:
JOHN HARRIS,
CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
M.DCCC.XXX.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of the following Volume, is fervently solicitous to create in the minds of the young, at a very early period, a glowing admiration of the beautiful works of the Most High.

He begs leave to say, that, in his own experience, he has found this disposition, a perpetual source of real, and often of sublime enjoyment.

As a superficial perusal of the subsequent pages must present to the mental eye, a series of interesting rural landscapes, the Writer trusts that they will always

afford gratification, and he hopes, sometimes, even a feast to the youthful imagination.

Should his labours lead the mind of a single youth, to HIM, whom all should venerate and love, he will think himself amply remunerated: as, he trusts, it is the most ardent desire of his spirit, to celebrate

“ Him, first,—Him, last,—Him, midst,—and without end!”

Southampton,

1828.

TO
JOHN BROADLEY WILSON, Esq.
OF
CLAPHAM;
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS
MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
AS A
FEEBLE EXPRESSION
OF
THE SINCERE GRATITUDE
OF ITS
AUTHOR.

S P R I N G.

- I. THE DAWN OF SPRING.
- II. ITS LOVELINESS.
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IN THE COUNTRY.
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- X. INFANCY AND YOUTH, THE SPRING OF LIFE.

SKETCHES
FROM
THE VOLUME OF CREATION.



I.

THE DAWN OF SPRING.

SEE! the gloomy winter passes away; he retires to the north; the keen frosts, the cold, the desolating blasts, they depart with him.

The snows melt; they disappear; the full river bears them to the mighty ocean.

Still the morn and the eve are but misty and comfortless; the chilling shower and the driving hail tell us, that the dreary season is scarcely gone.

But oftentimes the warmer gales blow,
and the tops of the mountains and hills
look green.

The beautiful sunshine falls more directly on the ground; the balmy rays frequently visit the earth; and the snow-drop looks out from beneath the laurel shade.

The trees and the hedge-rows bud; they tell us, that the green leaves and flowers are coming to adorn them; a few peep forth already.

The grass is springing up in the fields; and there will soon be plenty for the flocks and the cattle.

Hark! how the sweet birds even now attempt the accustomed song; see, where the songstress of the early dawn, warbling her morning hymn, rises to the very gate of heaven.





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Lo ! there, on the sunny bank, the pretty lambs play ; whilst the flock is resting securely in the sheltered fold.

Now the husbandman goes forth to turn up the earth ; the sower follows, and casts the precious seed into the ground.

And who has made the trees bud, and the grass spring, and the lambs play, and the lark sing, and the flowers bloom ? And who invites the peasant to cultivate the field, and to prepare for the future harvest ? It is the great God, whose tender “ mercies are over all his works.”

What voice has bid the snows melt, and the cold depart, and the softer gales blow ? It is the voice of the Almighty ; they obey no will but his, who said, in the beginning, “ Let there be light ! and there was light !”

II.

THE LOVELINESS OF SPRING.

THE world again becomes fresh and lovely ; it smiles with new lustre ; even as when it first came from the hands of its Maker.

A short time since, the fields had no charms ; but now they are covered with beauty ; and every one feels pleasure as he walks over them.

Yonder deep valley is no longer dreary ; and the tops of the high mountains which encircle it, are visited more early by the bright sun-beams.

The trees are no more rugged and bare ; they are arrayed in leaves of fine green ;

and many have their branches adorned with flowers of every hue.

The rivulet, lately stayed in its course by the icy hand of winter, loosed from its fetters, now gently murmurs along through the blooming meadows.

A little while ago, and no voice was heard but that of the fierce tempest; this is hushed,—and the cattle low,—the flocks bleat,—the birds sing,—the ring-dove coos,—and the fields are full of exhilarating sounds. Every where, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody, break upon the attentive ear.

Now the chaffinch builds her pretty nest; the little chicken comes out of the egg, and hides itself beneath the fostering wing of its fond mother; the bee roams from blossom to blossom, in search of the delicious honey; the butterfly leaves his

dark cell, and spreads his finely-spotted wings, exulting in the bright beams of the orb of day.

The vast creation has awakened, for God has spoken; it lives anew, for God has breathed on it; it is beautiful, because He has looked on it, and enriched it with his smile.

See! where HE passes through the gardens, and orchards, and fields,—the grass, and herbs, and flowers, and fruits,—and loveliness, in ten thousand thousand forms, attend his footsteps.

All renovating Spirit! pour on my benighted mind thy enlightening beams. Let my heart glow with the warmth of thy love! Bend a listening ear, whilst I add to the general song, the feeble accents of my praise.

III.

SEEDS.

HAST thou noticed the little seeds, which now every where send up their green shoots from the ground? The great God, who planted them, has made them vegetate. To many of them He gave wings: they were wafted by the gale of the evening to the spot where He had designed them to grow.

Hast thou marked the majestic oak? How numerous are its branches; how mighty is its strength; and how pleasing, in the heat of the day, is its cooling shade!

The gigantic branches of that majestic tree, with all its fine foliage, were once won-

derfully wrapped up, and in a very small space. They were enclosed in the little acorn. Who, besides God, could have shut them up in so small a compass? This diminutive, but wonderful work, speaks aloud of his omnipotence.

Hast thou gazed on the beautiful flower? It sprang up out of a root which had no loveliness. Who could have imagined, that so rich a gem, had been deposited in so rough a casket? Surprising, indeed, are the inimitable productions of the divine hand!

Hast thou sometimes paused amidst the delicious fields of the rising corn? Hast thou there thought of the divine goodness? The husbandman cast the inestimable seeds into the ground; this was all which he had it in his power to do; God sent the dew, and the rain, and the sunshine to nourish it; He made its root lay

hold of the earth; and He caused the green blade to spring above the ground.

Very soon, the ear will shoot forth from the stem; the time of harvest will also come, and there will be the full corn in the ear.

As the tree is hid securely in its seed; as the flower is carefully concealed in its root; and, as the ear is safely wrapped up in the grain of corn,—so, man dies, but he is not lost; he is laid in the cold tomb, till the bright morning, when the day-spring shall break upon it from on high.

Then, as the lovely ear rises from the perished grain; as the majestic tree comes forth from the rugged seed; and, as the beautiful flower rises from the unsightly root,—so, man shall spring from the dust, and be an angel of light,—exulting for ever in the presence of his Father and his God!

IV.

THE RISING SUN.

LET us shake off our slumbers, and go abroad,—the golden morning dawns.

Look! the clouds become lighter, they gently divide, and are borne away by the early gale.

Just now, we could not see any thing; the beautiful creation was not visible; for darkness had covered the fine landscape with her sable mantle.

But now it appears again, clad in its gayest, and most glittering robe; and all bespangled with gems of the pearly dew.

The horizon glows with loveliness; the thin vapours are tinged with the vivid tints of the bow of heaven.

See! the sun rises,—he bursts on the enraptured gaze; he is so magnificent that there is none like him; the strongest eye cannot look at him long. He is clothed with splendour, and is very great: yet he is but a tiny spark,—yea, he has no brightness, when compared with HIM who bade him shine.

New joy, with the opening day, visits all the works of the Most High; it thrills through the bosoms of the myriads of beings which God has formed; they awake and hail the light; they are glad that they are alive and happy.

It is God who has bade the sun rise again,—every ray which beams from him is his; He makes him shine as gloriously as

at the first, when his almighty word kindled his flame.

Bereft of his animating beams, the mighty globe would be a vast desert: there would be no sound of joy or gladness; every herb and plant would wither; the flowers would lose all their beauty; no little bird would pour forth his song; the wide creation would languish and die.

Source of light and beauty to this lower world, no hand can stay thee in thy course,—thou dost proceed and shine, till thou dost set in glory. O be my path like thine! Till I wake, where the perfect day pours around its hallowed beams, and there is no night any more for ever.

Creator of the sun! Parent of this beautiful system! My soul rises to thee! O give me, though but a worm of the dust, thy favour! Let my song, though

it be as the feeble lisplings of the little babe, rise to the heavens, and reach even to thy throne !

Being of Beings ! Former and Father of immortal man ! Thou, whose bright rays are infinitely brighter than the sun ! rise on my aspiring spirit, with "healing beneath thy wings !"

V.

FLOWERS.

COME, let us walk in the garden. Showers of fine blossoms adorn the fruit trees. And flowers innumerable, in all their loveliness, are springing up out of the ground.

Lately, the little primrose, and the sweet violet, decked that sunny bank; they threw their fragrance all around them. Now, more delicate than the finest satin, softer than the richest velvet, the auriculas charm the eye. And there, the imperial crown flower is looking forth in its glory, amidst the multitude of its starry leaves.

The tulip does not yet lift its stately

head ; the nipping air of the evening would blast it ; and the cold rains would rob it of its beauty.

Soon, the ranunculus, glowing in its vermilion array,—the variegated, the exquisite carnation,—and the delicious rose, the queen of the flowers, will spring forth from their concealment ; the days are mild, but they wait for the season that will be yet milder. Every little flower knows its appointed time ; it appears not but in its season ; then it comes, speaking in beautiful language the praise of the Most High.

Walk forth, O man, thou who art proud of thy acquirements, and of thy genius ! Come, try the utmost force of thy skill. Call a single tulip into being,—finish the work,—streak it with all the loveliest tints of the bow of heaven ! Thou canst not. Form, then, one of the little blossoms, like

those on the trees, and give it its fragrance! Thou canst not. Only summon one blade of grass out of the earth! Thou art not able,—the work is too mighty for thee. Feel thy insignificance! With all thy boasting, and imaginary consequence, thou art nothing!

Though the flowers which are now blooming, will soon die,—ere they pass away, others will arise out of the ground, to please the eye with their charms, and to delight the senses with their fragrance. The Creator does not leave his works, at any time, without some objects which are beautiful.

There is no season of the year which is not decked with its flowers; the proofs that God cares for his creatures, are perpetually renewed; O man, there is no period in thy life which is not marked with his goodness. The tenderness which thrills

through the bosom of the fond mother to cherish infancy, is his,—from Him, is the fortitude of the virtuous youth to resist the fascinating smiles of vice,—it is He who imparts vigour to discharge the active duties of life,—to “bear the heat and the burden of the day,”—the consolations, that cheer him, who is rapidly passing into the vale of years, are his inestimable gift. Every thing below the skies is fading,—but the goodness of God abides eternally.

Many generations of beautiful flowers have passed away; and the present will soon be gone. So, the loveliest of the race of man must die.

There is a world, where there is no death,—there, if we love and serve God on earth, we shall live with Him, and bloom for ever.

VI.

THE GREATNESS, WISDOM, AND GOODNESS
OF GOD.

LIFT up thine eyes, O man; gaze on the sparkling heavens. Every little star has something to say of Him who made it: it has, indeed, no voice, nor can it speak any language; but though it shines in solemn silence, yet its beams tell aloud of God's glory.

Every star and sun, as it rolls through the mighty firmament, is held up by Him. It is He who makes them bright; they would not have any splendour, if He did not give it them.

The earth on which we live, is great;

and the sun is very many times greater than our globe. How great then is God ! He has created a multitude of such suns ; he has made worlds, such as this, without number ; he called, they sprang into existence at his word, they filled the place which he bade them in the vast expanse.

How beautiful is creation ! it is always lovely, but now it is more so than at other times, for Spring scatters her blooming flowers over the fields and the mountains ; the valleys ring with delicious melody, they shout for joy. Bright and glorious are the earliest beams of the opening day ; but spring has no charms, and even the sun has no brightness, when compared with God. He dwells in the light which is inaccessible. The highest angel cannot gaze on Him. He is infinitely purer than the

light ; He is infinitely brighter than the sun !

Man is wise ; the breath of the Almighty has given him understanding ; he rises to the heavens, and counts the stars ; he descends to the bowels of the earth, — he brings from the secret place, to the light of day, the sparkling gem ; he builds the vessel, which bears him, even without the wind or the tide, over the mighty deep, — he sails round the world, a small part of which alone he inhabits. God has made him wise ; he is the wisest of the creatures. But his wisdom is as nothing, compared with that of his Maker, — it is scarcely as one little ray of the sun, to all the beams which he has poured forth since he began to shine.

The good man loves God, and serves Him. He loves his fellow creatures. He

is always trying to lessen the misery which there is in the world. If he be able, he feeds the hungry; he instructs the ignorant; he clothes the naked; he comforts the afflicted; he gives medicine to the sick; those who are bowed down by misfortune and oppression, he raises up; he never ceases to do good through his whole life. There are many such persons in society. God has made them what they are. There is no good in the wide universe which did not come from God. The kindness of all creatures is as nothing to his,—or, it is but as the little tiny drop to his,—which is as the mighty ocean, fathomless and immeasurable.

And will this great, and wise, and good God bless me? Me,—who am but as a little worm, gently creeping over the face of a small part of his glorious works?

Will He hear my feeble prayer? Can it indeed rise up to the height where He dwells? It can, — for though his throne is above the stars, yet He is ever near me, — He knows, at every moment, the most secret thought of my inmost soul.

And will He look down from his throne of light and glory, and call me a child of his? He will, — for He bade me live; He keeps my heart beating every moment; He has never ceased to bless me, ever since I began to breathe. In his holy word, He bids me tell Him my every want; He bids me praise his great and holy name. He has sent his dear Son into the world to bless and to save me. I will cry to Him then, for I may; I will bow low in adoration at his footstool. I will say, Be gracious to me, O my Father, who art in heaven!

VII.

THE INNUMERABLE TRIBES OF BEING.

I WILL think of the large family of beings who wait on God ; they are very numerous ; no one can possibly count them.

Wherever I cast my eyes, there is life. The cattle graze through the fruitful vale ; there they find a paradise, and are happy.

The timid hare makes her form in the grassy copse : the pheasant conceals his golden plumage among the shady boughs of the thick forest. There the playful squirrel leaps from tree to tree ; and there, too, the finely-proportioned deer, beautifully spotted, roam.

The innocent flocks crop the green

blade, on the sides of the high mountain ; there, the goat frolics ; he bounds, in the twinkling of an eye, from one craggy eminence to another.

Yonder is the immeasurable ocean ; it is full of creatures ; there is the silvery mackerel, and the unwieldy porpoise ; there are multitudes who reside in palaces of beautiful shells ; there are the little shrimp, and the mighty whale, and fishes innumerable.

The air teems with life ; flies, and fowls without number, pass through it on their light wings. There are immense nations of little insects which no eye can see ; which, perhaps, no glass can make visible. Now the ephemera spring into existence : for a few hours, they sport and flutter in the warm sunbeams ; and then are swept away by the gale of evening.

The barren rock is peopled with inhabitants. Every little plant which rears its head is a dwelling place : so, too, is every lovely flower, and each leaf of every tree. The charming rose is a fine mansion, full of sweetness ; many, as well as man, are regaled by its fragrance.

A thousand millions of human beings dwell every moment on different parts of the face of the earth ; they reside in villages, and towns, and cities.

Who feeds this mighty family ? All want different kinds of sustenance ; all, from the little insect, to the huge elephant, without their daily food, would droop and die.

“ God, who gave them life, supports it. He gives to each, that which is suitable to its nature. He has a vast store-house which is inexhaustible. All, all, wait on

Him ; he openeth his beneficent hand ; the desire of every living thing is satisfied.

The kind care of the Almighty extends to the great universe of being ; to the sparrow which flies through the air ; and to the little worm which crawls upon the ground, — as well as to man, the Lord of this lower world, — and to the angel of light who exults in his presence.

Poor peasant ! attend to thy duty, and cast thy care upon the good God. When thy little ones ask for bread, He hears them ; He will not be unmindful of their wants. He feeds the young ravens when they cry ; and will He not much more feed them ? He will ; and He will give them raiment too ; for He clothes even the flowers of the field with inimitable beauty.

Negro ! labouring through thy wretch-

ed life in chains ;* He knows thy wrongs, and He will assuredly avenge them ! The cries, from thy house of bitter bondage, have reached even to his throne. Call upon Him ; his compassionate ear is open to the gentlest sigh of the helpless captive. He will give thee to drink of the sweet stream of his mercy ; He will raise thee to a home, whither thy cruel tyrant cannot follow thee !

* This horrible doom is not unfrequent in the West Indies, as appears from the papers of Governor Maxwell, laid before the House of Commons.

VIII.

LEADING FEATURES OF A SPRING MORNING.

It is the sweet morn, and the fields are bright with the pearly dews. Many times the wakeful cock has been crowing; all around are aroused by his shrill tones; he is glad that the day is breaking, and his whole family partakes of his joy.

The clouds divide, and pass away; the high mountain, just now wrapped in their thick shade, is visible.

Now the sun-beams spring forth from the ruddy East; and the village spire is beautifully illumined with his golden rays.

The swallow has begun to build her pretty nest; she is twittering aloud on the

roof of the neat cottage, on the side of the hill. It was but very lately that she returned from a foreign land, to hail the reviving spring. See, how she plumes her swift wing ; she darts, like an arrow, along the glassy surface of the smooth river.

Now the shepherd boy shakes off his slumbers ; he hastes to visit his fleecy charge ; his crook is in his hand, and his shaggy dog, full of joy, plays and barks around him. The sheep all know him ; they are not alarmed at his approach. He unpens the fold ; the flock goes forth, with the tender lambs ; their bleatings fill the air. Scattered every where over the pastures, deliciously green, how prettily they adorn them !

See, where, at the door of the farmhouse, the mistress appears ; her shrill voice resounds through the wide home-

stall ; joyful, to the feathered tribes, are her well-known accents ; she summons them to their morning meal ; look ! they run, they fly, to pick it up.

There is the parent hen, and her pretty little ones. How she sets up her feathers, and spreads out her wings, and warns all around her not to disturb, or assault her young. They know what she says to them, and they obey her voice. She searches diligently for the food, and gives to every one of them a portion. When they are weary, or cold, they repose, and warm themselves under her soft plumage.

Yonder is the husbandman, girding his sturdy team with the russet harness. They are going to turn up the furrows of the fallow-field, and to cast in the precious seed. In a few months, the joyful reapers





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THE MILK-MAID.

Published May 1st, 1830, by John Harris, corner of St. Paul's Church-yard.

will shout, and the golden harvest will wave on the barren ground.

See! the cottage door opens; the labourer is going out to his employ. Though he toils hard from the morning to the evening, his countenance is healthful. He follows the plough, and collects the noisome weeds; or, he opens the water-courses; or, he repairs the broken mounds. A little bag is thrown over his shoulder; it encloses a morsel of hard cheese, and a huge piece of brown bread. When he is thirsty, he drinks of the crystal spring from the hollow of his hand. Pleasant, even as a delicious banquet, to the hungry palate of the weary hind, is the hard crust, and the cooling draught.

The milk-maid, neatly clad, comes out of the sweet dairy. Her clean pail is upon her head. Lo! the cows are brought

up from their pasture to meet her ; they wait her arrival ; their udders are full of luscious milk ; at her bidding, they freely pour forth the rich treasure.

The tradesman arises ; he pursues his honest calling ; he goes into the city, to buy, and to sell, and to get gain.

The merchant enters his vessel ; it is freighted with valuable commodities ; the white sails are hoisted to the favourable breeze ; he takes leave of his beloved kindred, and bids his native shores farewell ; he is voyaging where the earliest sun-beams gild the spicy isles of the eastern ocean.

How beautiful, and how manifold, are the works of God ! He has made them all in infinite wisdom. The wide creation is a vast treasury, full of his boundless riches.

IX.

BLIGHT IN THE ORCHARD.

COME, let us walk through the beautiful orchard. Though the fine blossoms are gone, yet the young fruit adorns the trees. It is of many kinds. Every tree has a voice,—and it says, that God is good!

The juicy cherries are already turning red,—the warm sun is ripening them apace. We may soon gather these little red-streak apples, and those early pears. Some of them are out of our reach; but when they are ripe, they will fall from the high boughs. It is the great God who has turned the fine flowers into fruit.

But see! here are many of them already on the ground; they are shrivelled,—the insect armies have seized on them, and cut them off. But they have not made the whole their prey. And that which they have left, will be the larger and the better. The trees could not well have borne those which have fallen. Still the harvest will be abundant: there is oftentimes much of God's goodness, O man! in what thou dost deplore.

There might have been none left. The puny invisible hosts, which have cut off a part, might have destroyed the whole. If God had given them a commission, they would have done so.

The great God has many arrows in his quiver. Who,—who, have ever hardened themselves against Him, and have prospered?

There was a mighty king; he would not do as God bade him. A great river

poured its vast stream through his kingdom. He drank of it every day ; so, too, did the millions of his subjects. The waters of it were delicious to their palate. Because they rebelled against the Most High, he turned the Nile into blood. He made the heavens and the earth ; the rivers, and the ocean, are his. At any moment He can do with them what He pleases ; and nothing is too hard for Him to do.

He bade the hail-stones fall upon that wicked land ; they obeyed his voice ; the thunder, mingled with hail and fire, ran along upon the ground. The trees were smitten ; their large branches were broken off ; and the cattle were wounded and died. Yet, though God's judgments were poured out upon them, neither the sovereign nor his people would turn from their sins.

So, God called for the locusts,—they

came at his summons,—for every creature but man obeys the voice of God. The immense armies of these insects, like the thick clouds, obscured the light of the sun; they stripped the trees of their verdure; they ate up the fields of green corn, and made the pastures desolate. Yea, they devoured every green thing.

Still the impious monarch refused to submit to the divine commands. So, God sent his angel, and cut off the first-born of every family in the land. But yet the people hardened their hearts against God, and would not mind what He said to them. So, the Almighty blew with his winds; the king and his hosts were scattered; they sank like lead, and perished in the mighty waters. Who,—who, have ever hardened themselves against God and have prospered?

All, all, are dependent upon God, from the least to the greatest. No one can, at any time, be safe and happy without his care and blessing. Each tribe of being, every moment, have life, and breath, and all things from him.

The orchard and the garden may blossom beautifully ; but, without his constant smile, there will be no fruit. The fields may stand thick with rising corn, and yet no harvest will be gathered into the garner, without the perpetual blessing of the great Husbandman. If He give the word, the sun will consume, or the rains deluge, or the mildews will blast the hope of man.

I will ask the divine favour. I will never give up seeking this distinguished favour, till I find it. It is the one thing which is absolutely needful. Those whom God blesses, are indeed blessed.

X.

INFANCY AND YOUTH, THE SPRING OF LIFE.

EVERY thing is fresh and new. The green fruit, and the tender grass, and the young corn, and the playful lambs, all have a voice, — and they say, “It is the Spring-time of the year.”

The busy day is gone; and the tasks of the school are ended. The youngsters have gained their liberty: they delight to be free. They are all talking at one time. They leap for joy. The village rings with their shouts.

See! they separate to their sports. Some run in the swift race; some shoot the marble with careful aim; others amuse themselves with the ball.

Some of them are but meanly clad, and their fare is homely. Hard is the couch on which they repose. But every countenance smiles ; and the roses bloom upon their cheeks. They enjoy the present moment, and are without a care. Their every motion, the sound of each voice, tells all around them that they are happy. It is a delightful spectacle !

See ! the old man looks out from the cottage, which is so prettily adorned with the sweet honeysuckle. How is his brow wrinkled with care, and his countenance is withered. His head is covered with locks of a silvery hue, for more than eighty winters have passed over him.

Lo ! tottering, he comes forth ; he takes his accustomed place on the seat near the door. It is a season of reflection. The joys he has tasted, and the sorrows which have pierced his heart, since he, too, fro-

licked on the green, are once more fresh on his memory.

Oh, yes,—he thinks of the days when he was young,—when he ran in the race, or struck the ball. Before him, as in vision, pass the companions of his youth. He delights to repeat their names, and their history. He stands, lonely, as the tree of the forest, whilst all around have fallen by the resistless axe.

Yonder is the fond mother; she, too, has relinquished her domestic cares, to gaze on the playful throng. She views them with smiles. Some of her own children are among them; her eye searches them out, and it rests on them with pleasure.

She has her little one in her arms; she unfolds her bosom; the infant seizes with eagerness the delicious food. The smile

of joy glows on the sweet features of her child. Another, a little older, she places on the soft grass. Delighted, he crops the butter-cups, and the daisies: he calls to his mother to mark their beauty: and he, too, is a flower, lovelier than the wide creation boasts.

All hail, delightful picture! I see not at this moment any shade in thee: thou art all animation and sunshine. I will sit down on this mossy bank, and gaze on thee. I will thank God, that, in a world where there is so much sorrow, the Spring-time of life is happy.



S U M M E R.

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I.

B E E S.

SEE ! where the fervid sun arises in the
rubied east : the wide creation wakes at
his summons ; it welcomes his animating
beams.

The little bee, the harbinger of summer,
comes forth to exult in his rays, and to
sip the ambrosial dews.

All that have life are in motion ; but
this insect artisan is the most busy of them
all. He does not suffer a moment to re-
volve unimproved. At mid-day, ere yet
the wintry blasts were gone, he left the
hive to search for the sweet flower. Now
he flies about the furze-common, from the

ruddy morn till the purple evening ; or, he roams through the sandfoil ground, or the balmy field, where the sweet beans are in blossom ; or, he visits the fine garden ; or, he revels amid the blooming bank of the fragrant thyme.

He flies away very far from his resting-place ; yet he returns again ; never does he mistake the path through the air to his delicious home.

But where is it that he reposes, when the sun withdraws his warm rays, and the flowers bow down their gay heads to inhale the refreshing dew ?

Dost thou see that pretty cottage, peeping beautifully from among the green trees ? The sweet woodbine twines round the door, and the blushing roses encircle the neat window. Hast thou passed by, when the sultry rays of noon shone around

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BEEES.

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thee? ' Then thou hast seen its aged matron, with her spectacles of tortoise-shell, enjoying the cool shade of the elm, as she turned her smooth bobbins around the neat pillow. Hast thou returned in the still evening? Thou hast marked her in the little porch, musing on the hallowed page, the perennial spring of her joys,—and her unerring guide to a blessed immortality.

There the hives stand, in the midst of the full garden of flowers; and among the beds of the sweet-scented marjoram.

Many thousand artificers reside in those lowly dwellings; there is ample room for them all; and all are endowed with superior skill. In each community the greatest order and harmony reign. Every citizen has his labour assigned to him; he knows what it is, and he is doing it cheerfully.

Some stop the chinks in the hive ; or, they strengthen the weak places ; or, they drag out the dead insect : is the burden too heavy ? others help ; if their united effort fails to withdraw it, they enclose it with a strong cement.

Some go abroad ; they collect the yielding wax, and knead it with their mouths and their feet. Regular, and elegant, are the cells which they form with it, for their food, or their young. The multitude roam from flower to flower, and gather the delicious honey ; they fill their capacious hive with the liquid gold.

See ! one is just returning from the blooming field ; he is laden with food ; a fellow-labourer, who is hungry, meets him, and he lets fall a drop for him. No one is jealous of the other. Though they are but little creatures, they unite their efforts, and so, they do mighty things.

They know, that the delightful hours of sunshine will not last always, and they improve them. They lay up a rich store for the dark days of winter, when the little flower fears to look abroad upon the storm.

They have a monarch, and she is the parent of the whole race. She lives for the good of all; all love her, and do what she desires them.

Little ones, smiling through the cottage lattice, blooming, like the roses around you,—you may learn of the little bee. Obey the will of your father; gratify the tenderest wishes of your fond mother. Let the sweet voice of love always resound through your dwelling. The brother should help the sister; the sister should be kind to the brother; all should afford aid to the indulgent parents.

The bee who gathers the most honey,

does not ask for more than any other. The sweet food is equally distributed, and according to the wants of each. Every one lives and labours for the good of all.

Whilst thou art in thy vigour, be diligent. Youth and health make the spring and summer of thy existence. Trifle not away the precious hours of sunshine which are allotted thee. The chill wintry days will surely come ; provide for them. Forget not, that it is the hand of industry which fills the hive with the golden treasure.

II.

THE SUMMER'S EVE.

THE peaceful hours of evening dawn.
I will wander through the fine fields, and
enjoy the cool breeze. I will mark the
weary peasant as he returns from his hard
labour.

See, where the blooming milk-maid
comes from the cow-shed ; her mistress
meets her with smiles. How steadily, on
her head, she bears the white pail full of
treasure.

The patient ox has closed the toils of
the day ; he is rejoicing, at his liberty, in
the rich pasture.

Now the rooks are directing their

way homewards ; their airy chambers are among the high trees of the avenue.

How my shadow extends ! Is it indeed mine ? It is of a giant length !

The lark has risen to the heavens ; she is chanting her last song. She is bidding farewell to the setting sun.

Mark the cottage windows ; they are beautifully lighted up with his golden beams ; he colours the fine landscape with inimitable hues.

I will stand on this rock, I will gaze on him till he is quite gone. There,—there,—he drops behind the distant mountain. Yet still he pours forth his brilliant rays ; he tinges the clouds with his refulgent dyes ; the wide heavens are bright with his glory.

Hither do thou come, thou, who dost direct the pencil with the hand of genius,

—come hither,—survey the finished work of the divine Artist ; confess, to his praise, that thou hast no skill ; that, contrasted with his, the beautiful tints of thy colouring have no beauty.

But the lustre fades already, it is vanishing away. The soft hour of the twilight comes. Sober Eve draws over the wide creation her grey mantle : she touches every thing with her dewy fingers.

The blue mist rises ; it creeps slowly around ; it curls over the smooth waters of the silvery lake.

The bird of night flies from the threshing floor. She explores the thick hedge-row with her keen eyes ; or she skims over the surface of the blooming field ; she is pursuing after her prey.

See ! from yonder thick cloud, the rays break ; its gloomy fleeces are lightened ;

it opens its beautiful bosom ; the empress of the night breaks forth in her majesty ; millions of eyes, illumined with her mild splendour, are admiring her glory.

There is no beginning, there is no end to the works of God. In boundless space no spot is so dreary, that we may say,—Here, there is no proof of the power, or of the goodness, of the beneficent Creator.

Tell me, sweet Moon ! art thou formed only to light up our little globe, and to lift its waters from the mighty deep ! Or, art thou a world like ours ? where stormy oceans roll, and the glad valleys smile, and the big mountains lift up their lofty heads to the sky ? And the happy multitude, do they send their perpetual hosannas to the throne of God ?

But my accents are too feeble to reach thee,—thou dost not hear me, bright orb !

Thou hast a voice, and it is eloquent.
Amidst the solemn stillness of creation, I
hear it; it speaks of Him who bade thee
shine.

Enwrapped in thy rays of silver, I will
climb the sweet hill. I will think of His
goodness. I will gently whisper the grate-
ful hymn to the soft breeze.

But, hark! some minstrel from the near
copse, pours forth the swelling song. It
breaks on my ear, far sweeter than the
sweetest tones of the sweet harp. It thrills
through my bosom. The delicious sounds
take hold of my spirit. I can proceed no
farther.

I will sit down on the trunk of this aged
tree. I will not move a finger; I will
breathe softly. Again she begins her im-
passioned strain. How it echoes through
the vale around! How plaintive, how

gay, how simple, how rich, how sublime,
is her melody !

Evening ! with thy grey clouds, and
cool gales, and laureat bird, and starry
vest, and sweet moon, I love thee ! I will
woo thee in the retired walk ! Oft will I
meet with thee there ! With the notes of
the nightingale, in the midst of the great
temple, I will pour forth the song of my
praise !

III.

HAY-MAKING.

How fine was the meadow, richly laden with the thick grass. The flowers sprinkled over it, beautifully adorned its robe of bright green.

The great God bade the verdure spring ; his dew, his sunshine, and his rain, have nourished it. No one could count the little spires, they were so many.

How changed is the scene ! The keen scythe of the mower has despoiled it of its charms. Since I last gazed on the field, how are its lustre and glory withered away !

So did I mark thee, sweet youth ! On

thy smiling features, every eye rested with pleasure. Thou wast the hope of thy fond Sire ; the joy of her, whose tender bosom cherished thy infancy. Very pleasant indeed wast thou to me. Oh, Jonathan ! how hast thou fallen before the cruel stroke of the last enemy, as the tree, in the pride of its blossom, is torn up by the vernal storm ! Amidst the tears of thy kindred, thou hast been gathered to the tomb of thy fathers. Yet, fragrant, as the bud of the moss-rose, torn from the parent stem, is thy beloved memory*.

It is but a little while since I passed by the pasture,—no human voice was heard, no trace of the footsteps of man, was seen there. There, the lark built her low nest ; there, in her solitude, long ere the dews

* The writer refers here to Mr. Jonathan Fiske, of Oxford ; a youth peculiarly amiable, and of much promise.

were exhaled, when the fresh morn, with her grey clouds, reposed on the brow of the high mountain, she welcomed with her sweet warblings the earliest beams darting from the blushing east.

Bird of the beauteous dawn ! far away hast thou fled,—for the peasant boy has borne off, exultingly, thy little ones, scarcely fledged, to his distant home.

All the village seek the field newly mown. Save from one little cot, near the large elm, no curling wreath of smoke arises; there, pining sickness, unwelcome guest ! has taken up her sad residence.

Every door is secured; all are gone forth; they return not, till the cool breeze of the evening refreshes the vale. All hands are busy; they are spreading the hay to receive the warm sunshine. There, the neat maid, the pride of the village,

blooming as the rose of the summer, trails along the white rake. See! foremost amid the busy throng is the active youth, with unwearied limbs, whose manly features are embronzed by the bright beams. There, too, feeble age, bowed down by the burden of years, labours, doing but little; scarcely, does he keep pace with the child, who, delighted, sports about with the light fork. Wrapped in the sweet grass, as a soft mantle, the little infant sleeps peacefully. Still rest, pretty babe! Thy mother, though busy, is watching over thee. Ofttimes does she glance on thee with her smiles. She is not far away; and when thou awakest, thou shalt nestle again in her fond bosom.

The sun has reached his meridian height; and the grass is scattered thinly over the wide pasture. Now, grateful to

the labouring band, is the cool shade.
There, beneath the fine-spreading oak,
they unfold their welcome stores. See,
how heartily they enjoy the sweet meal.

Child of luxury! thou, who dost sit,
with a sickly appetite, at the full banquet,
crowned with each delicacy,—mark with
what delight the poor peasant partakes
of his homely fare. Wake from the
protracted slumber. Waste not, on the
downy couch, the precious hours of early
sunshine. Hail, like the busy hind, the
gay morn! Climb the steep mountain:
there, from its lofty summit, welcome her
animating rays, when she first opens her
golden eyelids.

But the rural feast is finished; the cir-
cle rises with new vigour to their employ.
They throw the large crop together in
heaps; they rake it up clean from the

fresh-springing pasture. It is fragrant as the sweet nosegay of flowers.

See, where the husbandman comes with the sturdy team. His countenance is gay like the season; for he is pleased that the hours are so fine, and that the produce of his field is so great. He rejoices, that his cattle will have such wholesome provision through the bleak winter.

Now they throw up the fragrant treasure on the waggon; they bind on the weighty load. Pleased, they bear it away to the neat homestall, and carefully secure it in the closely-pressed rick. Its sweet scent is borne through the hamlet on the soft wings of the evening breeze.

The good God bade it rise from the ground; his sun-beams have ripened it. He takes care for the horse and the ox. The cattle on a thousand hills are his; it is He who gives them their daily food.

O Man! Thou, who art the noblest work of his hands, will He not care for thee? Yes, He will, for his name and his nature are LOVE. Over thee, his tender mercies are peculiarly extended. Put thy trust under the shadow of his wings. In thy darkest moments, lift to Him a supplicating eye. Ask for the mighty boon of his favour. His ear is ever open to all who invoke his great and holy name.

IV.

HEAT; SAILING; THE RUINED ABBEY.

THE cheering light re-visits the world once more. The glorious orb, which ushers in the day, has arisen in his splendour. How oppressive is the heat! The wide creation pants, and is weary.

Till just now, each creature exulted in the bright beams of the sun. All, that has life, hailed his approach. Each bird, delighted, saluted his return with a song. But now the minstrels have all sought the cool shade; they are mute, even the chirping of the grasshopper resounds no more through the mead.

The pastures, cleared of the sweet hay,

are dry, and burnt up. Not a fresh blade is to be seen, save beneath the thick shade of the hedge, or of the rank nettle.

Not a leaf quivers even on the poplar. I must relinquish my morning's walk. I dare not set out for the accustomed hill. The refreshing dews have arisen but lightly; and they have been long since exhaled. See, where, already, the cattle have rushed into the cool stream. The flocks, and their shepherd, are reclining in the shady grove.

Source of light and heat, I will bear thy warmth, without murmuring. Though thou hast drunk up the village brook; and though the sweet rose-buds droop their heads, thou art giving their bloom and their flavour to the peach and the nectarine,—thou art changing the green ear into the golden grain.

I will seek the thick arbour; there will I converse with the mighty dead, who yet live in their immortal writings. Genius does not—genius cannot die. Its labours at once instruct, admonish, and delight me.

I will open the ever fragrant page, the guide to immortality. I will think of the land it reveals, where the scorching sun pours not his rays; where, beside living streams, the Almighty Shepherd leads his ransomed flock; and where every tear is wiped from every eye, and that too for ever.

But the sweet breeze has arisen with the wave of the tide; I will spread to it the white sail, and shoot down the wide river. I will seek the fine ruins of the Abbey, embosomed in the woods, and muse there. See, where the gothic arch

looks out from its green covering, on the rippling stream.

Fallen is the massy, the well-adorned roof. It is scattered on the low pavement; the spectator tramples its glory beneath his feet. The full lustre of the day pours its radiance where once its dim beams faintly shone through the painted window.

Here ofttimes the schoolboy sports in thoughtless levity; he scrawls his important name on the fallen pillar; on the very spot where the shrine once appeared in its grandeur, and the sweet incense and the solemn chant rose to heaven.

There the fine ash throws abroad its majestic branches; it has sprung up on the very ground where the table was daily spread with the homely, or the delicious viands. *

* This is literally the case in Netley Abbey.

Here, the useless monk studied in his cowl, or counted his string of beads;—he is gone; the place which once knew him, knows him no more, — there is scarcely even a trace of his cell. The busy feet which for ages trod over this fine scene, are at rest.

Here, where Eliza* and her court shone in splendour,—where they sat down to the rich banquet, and conversed of the affairs of kingdoms, — where the viol and the lute charmed the ear, and the full choir poured forth the sweet strain,—the owl and the daw find a palace,—they reign in undisputed sovereignty.

O Time! what hast thou done! Thy touches have been fatal to the stability and beauty of this vast mansion. Its massy grandeur is fallen low, — thou

* Queen Elizabeth visited Netley Abbey, in August, 1560.

hast passed over it, and it is crumbling into dust. On every part of the pile thou has left the impress of thy iron feet.

Where are the mighty lords of this fine domain? They who said, in the pride of their heart, "It is ours!" Where, — the sons of superstition, who made it their permanent abode? Where, — the multitude of the young, the beautiful, the wealthy, and the gay, who have delighted to visit it? They are gone, — they are vanished from the scene which they have adorned, as the beauteous cloud of the summer's morning. Where is now their boasted pre-eminence over the poor peasant, whose ploughshare turned up the glebe?

CONTINUANCE! is not written on any object beneath the skies. But there is a

world where there is no decay. There, time, which spoils all things, has no place. Abiding mansions are there,—they lose not their beauty for ever. The way to them is laid open. Rest not, O man, till thou hast good reason to expect an entrance. Poor, without this hope, is the occupant of a throne, or the possessor of a world!

V.

RAIN.

THE morning is fresh and gloomy : the sun has long since forsaken his chamber in the east ; and though we cannot see him, he is far onward in his course. His fine countenance is obscured in the thick clouds.

Cool and refreshing are the hours ; the gale is hushed ; and a general calm pervades the works of God. Scarcely does a little leaf move on the bough. The heavens, pleasantly lowering, promise the grateful shower.

And see ! more precious than silver or gold, the sweet drops descend gently,—

but they are soon gone,—the parched fields drink them up. The little flowers lift their pining heads,—they smile with new beauty. The sweetbriar hedge sends forth a delicious fragrance.

Without rain, the heavens would soon be as brass, and the earth as iron. Every green thing would perish. The creatures would languish and die; even man himself would pass away, and the vast globe would be uninhabited. Desolation would stretch out over every spot of it her horrible sceptre.

Who could refresh creation with showers, but He who formed it with a word? It is the work of Omnipotence. God is the Father of the drops of rain. He speaks to the clouds,—they obey his voice; they fly on the wings of the wind to the uttermost parts of the earth, and pour forth

their rich treasures. Sweet shower! the herds, and the flocks, and each little insect, and bird, hail thee! Every heart beats with fresh joy.

Though we may be ready sometimes to think, that the good God is unmindful of his creatures, yet it is never the case. Though we should always desire the gay sunshine, and fine weather, they would not be good for us; and we should soon pray for the thick clouds to envelope the skies, and for the precious showers to descend on the earth.

That which God wills is best; if we knew things as He does, we should always think so. It is He who has sent us sorrow and pain,—and He has turned them into blessings. With what dread have we marked affliction's cloud spreading around our dwelling! Yet have we found it

big with the treasures of God's great goodness.

Does God withhold the rain, or the sunshine, when they are needed? He has reason for doing so. It is in merciful chastisement; or, to remind us, that He is the giver of them,—and to bring us to supplicate them at the throne of his mercy.

Does He send us pain and sickness? They are to tell us, that we are not to stay here always; that there is a better country, where there is no sorrow; they are, to bid us prepare for the solemn moment of our departure. We cannot be ready for the unseen world, if we think not of it. Whether we are prepared or not, we must soon enter on it.

But the clouds divide; they are passing northwards. The great God bade them come; they obeyed his word; and, at his

mandate, they are fleeing away. So,—troubles do not continue always. Though there may be a few bitter drops in the cup of life, yet it is full of the loving kindness of our Father, who is in heaven.

In the seasons as they roll, He himself speaks to an ungrateful, to an inattentive world. I hear his voice in the drops of rain, and amidst the bright sunshine. Every little flower of Spring hath something to say of Him. Even now, I hear it resounding from the majestic arch which spans creation. It is again telling the world, in eloquent language, that its Maker delights to be gracious.

Refulgent bow ! I love to gaze on thee. Thou art at once sublime and beautiful. I will feast my eyes with thy vivid colours. There,—are the red, and the orange, and the yellow, and the green, and the

blue, and the indigo, and the violet. Ah ! how glorious must He be, who arrayed thee in thy inimitable dyes !

I will think of his greatness. I will muse on all the astonishing wonders of his creating goodness ! I will meditate on the nobler, the more amazing scheme of redeeming love. I will give to Him who has loved me, the grateful tribute of my heart. I rejoice, I exult, I triumph in the assurance, that He reigns the absolute Sovereign of the wide universe !

VI.

THE BUTTERFLY.

MARK the little caterpillar, with its body of rings, and hooked feet,—how easily it passes from plant to plant, and from tree to tree.

Every where, in this delightful season of the year, it finds a paradise. How eagerly it devours the green leaves! God has bade plenty of them grow for all that have life.

But lo! the little ravager ceases to eat,—and he throws off his hairy raiment: he builds for himself a dwelling, and fastens it to the wall by strong threads. It has no door, or window, and there is no light

in it. Though alive, he buries himself in his habitation. He is safe there, when the snows descend,—and when the frosts and the tempests are abroad in the fields.

Now they are gone, he breaks open his cell,—he comes forth,—but look ! he is not the same. He crawls no more on the ground. The rings which composed his body, where are they ? Where is his rough garment ? Where, his keen teeth, with which he cut off the green verdure ? He has cast them all off for ever.

Child of the summer months ! Lovely little creature ! How splendid is thy attire ! How beautiful are thy wings ! Exquisitely fine are the feathers which form thy covering ; their hue is of delicate whiteness, of glittering gold, of the rich purple, of the bright vermilion.

I should like to fly with thee through the sky,—or, to roam, like thee, from one sweet flower to another,—or, to bask in the animating beams of the sun,—or, to soar on high, and gaze on the glorious works of the Almighty hand.

But who has given thee those charming wings, so exquisitely spotted,—who bade thee, once a loathsome worm, rise through the soft air? I know who has done this great work. I will think of all his wondrous ways.

And what am I? And what shall I shortly be? Am I not also as a little worm, moving gently over a small space of the mighty globe?

The grass of the meadow furnishes me with sweet milk for my nourishment. I delight to eat of the vegetables, and of the fruits of the garden. My daily bread

is gathered from the furrows of the corn-fields.

Now I enjoy the delicious meal; but the time will come, when I shall enjoy it no more: then, the sweet food will be no longer sweet to me; I shall cease to partake of it.

My body is only a frail tenement; but a spirit occupies it which cannot die. When earth yields me no pleasure, it shall burst asunder its clay-dwelling, and fly away.

Yes,—believer in the Lord Jesus! thou, to whom his name is precious,—soon, thou shalt be an angel of light. Soon, thou, too, shalt spread thy beautiful wings, and soar far, very far, from this transient scene of sin and woe. In the glorious world, where the changes of time are unfelt, and unfeared, thou shalt associate, in

elevated society, with “the spirits of the just made perfect,”—thou shalt delight thyself for ever in the eternal sunshine of God’s blissful presence.

VII.

THE OCEAN.

I WILL stand on this high cliff; something new is ever to be seen from it. I will gaze on the immeasurable ocean; its changes are interesting and perpetual.

Hence the vapours and clouds arise, which water the whole earth; they are the parents of the springs, and of the rivers.

Hither, the crowds throng from the close city; they inhale, with delight, the fresh breeze; they joy to immerse the unfettered limb in the cool waters.

Here health resides, with her countenance illumined with smiles; and gay as

the flowers of the spring. Meet her, thou who art pining with sickness, meet her in the balmy wave. She will re-tinge thy pale cheek with her roseate hues.

In this vast abyss, the innumerable shoal is brought forth, and nourished. Here, the human race gather a constant harvest; it is inexhaustible; and it is produced without their labour or their care.

Though these waters roll between countries many thousand miles from each other, yet are they the mighty link which unites the nations. See, where, even now, the fine vessel, with full sail, enters into the haven, laden with the fragrant treasures of the spicy East.

It is a sublime scene, and it speaks aloud of God. He prepared the unfathomable deep for the billows, — they heard his voice, and occupied it. He bids

them ebb and flow. He charges his tempests to purify this world of waters. He encloses the impetuous waves with a wall of sand; yet is it immovable, and impenetrable as a barrier of adamant.

He gives the word,—the howling storm rises,—the liquid mountains swell towards heaven, — now, they are hurled with fury on the rocky shore,—gulphs, unfathomable and tremendous, burst on the astonished gaze. See, where the vessel, not manageable, is borne towards the fatal coast, — there,—she is among the dreadful breakers. Awful spectacle! she is dashed to pieces!

But, hark! the Almighty Ruler speaks again,—the ungovernable winds, the resistless waters, hear and obey. At his word, the raging ocean becomes calm; only the gentlest breezes softly kiss the white sail. Over the almost unruffled wave, the stately

vessel and the little bark glide imperceptibly.

God of the mighty ocean! I, a feeble creature of the family of man, stand on its margin and adore Thee. Thou dost hold its boundless waters in the hollow of thy hand. All of them before Thee are but as the shining dew drop of the morning.

Yes, I adore Thee,—thy goodness is wide as thy illimitable dominion,—and permanent as the foundations of thy everlasting throne.

I ask thy favour, — it is the supreme good,—bestow it, for thy Son's sake, on thy unworthy suppliant. Say to each rebel wave of passion in my soul, "Peace, — be still!"

Ye destined ages! roll on. O dawn! thou long-desired, thou happy, thou more than golden era, when the ransomed family

of God shall meet. Then the sea shall give up the dead which are in it. Then, beloved Edward, thy weeping Father shall again embrace thee. No more, for ever, shalt thou be torn away from his fond bosom. *

* The Author here alludes to Mr. Edward Collingwood; a youthful friend, of superior intellect and attainments; he died on his passage to Jamaica, and was buried in the ocean. He was most deservedly esteemed by all who knew him,—

“Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit.”

VIII.

THE THUNDER STORM.

THE sun has just set, but not in his glory. He seemed to go down in haste. A dull redness tinges the vapours around the horizon. A dreary twilight enshrouds the whole creation.

There is a general calm. Silence pervades the forest and the field. Each bird is gone for shelter to his leafy covering. The heavens are darker and darker, and no little star ventures to peep forth on the world.

I search for the top of the high mountain,—but it is no longer visible : there the clouds are piled upon clouds. Slowly, and

with solemn grandeur, they move around its brow; it is the throne of the spirit of the storm.

There, — saw you that lightning? Quicker than the sunbeams, it darted over the landscape. How beautifully it illumined the village spire! Heard you that noise? It was the thunder.

See! — the flashes are more frequent, — the skies open all around. The tempest spreads farther and farther. There,—what a stream of fire! The whole forest seemed on a blaze. The valley was enwrapped in a sheet of flame.

Again, — it darts vividly from the peak of the high mountain; by its light, for an instant, I saw the cattle, terror-struck, crowding around its base.

How tremendous is the rending of the clouds,—more widely the thunder roars,—

the sound becomes deeper, and louder, and louder; peal after peal, in dread succession, appals the ear. The solid ground trembles around me. God of the heavens, and of the earth, who would not fear Thee? With Thee, is terrible majesty!

The rains descend in a torrent,—the fires of heaven are mingled with them,—they run along the ground. It is a sublime,—it is an awful spectacle!

Yet I love to gaze on the fierce lightning, and to listen to the roar of the thunder,—they speak to the inmost soul of the grandeur of God. It is a moment of solemn awe. My spirit bows and adores.

So they bow,—so they adore,—who live in his awful presence,—who gaze on his unveiled glory.

Inconsiderate creature! thou who dost

live without Him in the world,—who dost condemn his paternal rule,—thou, who dost hide thyself in the darkness, that He may not see thee,—is there any cavern so dark, or so deep, that his lightnings cannot reach and illumine it? Is there any spot in his boundless dominion, where his thunders cannot arrest thee?—No,—before Him, the darkness is bright as the noon-day. His frown, in an instant, sinks the mightiest lower than the grave.

Look up, thou who art imploring his mercy,—look up,—thou mayest smile at the forked flashes which are hurled through creation. The majestic sounds, which fill the wicked with dismay, should only summon thee to praise Him, who rides in the whirlwind, and who directs the storm.

Soon, the great day of the Lord will

come; the devouring flame shall consume the heavens and the earth; and his awful voice shall call the creatures to his tribunal,—then, calm as the summer's evening, thou mayest lift thy countenance, and say, “I am happy! He, who summons the world to judgment is my Father, and my God!”

IX.

THE GRANDEUR OF GOD.

PARENT of the beautiful summer ! God of the whole earth ! I adore Thee. I elevate my spirit to Thee ; in the hope of thy favour I am happy.

Enrobed in light and majesty, Thou dost reign the gracious sovereign of the universe.

At thy word, the deep foundations of the world were laid ; at thy bidding, the everlasting hills lifted their high summit to the clouds.

There are no bounds to thy grandeur ; creation is majestic ; but compared with Thee, it has no sublimity.

Thy works are beautiful,—but compared with Thee, the heavens have no brightness, and the sun has no glory.

I cannot see Thee face to face, and live ; but I can trace thy perfections, in the hill, and in the vale ; in the river, and in the ocean ; in suns, and stars, and creatures, and in the rolling seasons.

O let me never survey the landscape and forget Thee,—thy Almighty hand formed it,—thy unrivalled pencil has finished it with inimitable beauty.

I see Thee, in the lovely star which ushers in the day,—all its bright rays are Thine. I behold Thee in the rosy morning,—thou dost unbar her gates of light, Thine are the dewy pearls which gem her sparkling robe,—the inspiration of the choral song, which echoes through the wide creation, at that hallowed hour, is Thine.

I meet Thee, amidst thy glorious works,
when the grey evening sheds around her
soothing balm ; when she draws over the
world her beautiful curtain glittering with
moon-beams, I see Thee in the sweet light.
The stars, in their midnight watches, shall
hear the hymn of my praise.

I see Thee, wherever I turn my gaze,—
I hear thy voice on the brow of the ma-
jestic mountain,—and among the herds
and the flocks in the blooming vale,—in
the hoarse gale which murmurs through
the wide forest,—and in the nightingale's
delicious song ; in the gentle spring, which
gushes from the foot of the hill near the
rural village,—and in the raging billows
of the immeasurable ocean ; it breaks forth
from the little lamp of the beautiful glow-
worm,—and from the broad flashes of the
swift-winged lightning ; from the appalling

thunders which resound through creation,
—and from the pleasant hum of the little
insect, returning with the fresh honey to
the busy hive.

O thou God of love,—for the common
blessings of thy Providence, I thank Thee;
but these cannot satisfy the boundless
desires of my soul. My fainting spirit
rises to thy throne: I ask thy smiles; I
supplicate imperishable good.

I adore, I bless Thee, that I have not
read the blooming volume of thy works in
vain; but more will I thank Thee, louder
shall be the song of my praise, for that
nobler Revelation, where thy brighter
glories are displayed, — where I behold
Thee, on the throne of thy boundless grace,
pouring forth the beams of thy mercy, on
an ungrateful, on a perishing world.

Oh, precious treasure! I will bind thee

to my heart. I will gratefully open thee each morning, and each evening. I will peruse thee on the bended knee. Mines of gold and of silver, compared with thee, are but worthless dross. In the path to the land where the day-spring shines for ever, thou art the lamp of my feet. Guide of my youth! Joy of my riper years! Thy blessed truths shall be the comfort of my declining age, and the sweet solace of my dying hour.

X.

THE SUMMER OF HUMAN LIFE.

HUMAN life, too, has its summer,—I will think of it.

The peasant rises with the sun,—he goes forth to his labour. He is but little weary ; though he does not return till the sweet beams of the orb of day, as it declines in the west, gild the sky. His sinews are as of iron and brass ; he is in the summer of his days.

There is the tradesman,—he is early looking after his affairs,—he eats the bread of carefulness ; he has an infant family, which looks up to him for the supply of their wants. The bright beams of nearly

forty summers have been poured upon his path. He is in the midst of life's eventful journey.

Go to the busy mart. There is the youth, who, a short time since, was foremost amidst the juvenile throng, sporting on the common, with the bat and the ball, or on the blooming heath, in the race; he has now arisen into manhood. Early he shakes off the soft slumber. He is distinguished in the scene of traffic. The allurements of pleasure turn not his feet aside from his steady course. His ardent spirit is in his engagements. He thinks not, that he may never enjoy the wealth he is so solicitous to procure. He is unmindful, that his vigorous sun may go down at noon. He has just entered on the ardent summer of his days.

Mark that pretty cottage, at the foot of

the hill; it is shielded by the eminence from the northern blasts. All its front is overspread with the fine branches of the mantling vine. That is the abode of earth's most elevated felicity. There resides a lovely family. A few years since, blooming in the spring of life, oft did I meet the parents at the sweet hour of the opening morn, or at the peaceful eve.

Oft did they pause, amid the blooming landscape, to feast on its beauties; to listen to the delicious song of the nightingale; or, to speak of the wonders of the All-creating hand. They were kindred spirits; they were one in their anxieties, and in their joys; in their sentiments, and in their pursuits; and their hearts were but one.

That neat cottage is their own. The garden was laid out, and adorned with

their own hands. A little one was given them, the dear pledge of their mutual love. The babe was the very picture of her fond mother. There, in miniature, were seen her auburn hair, her sweet lips, and her blue eyes.

And then another lovely infant was added to the household ; and all said, that he was just like his sire ; so, they live again in their children, and their own infancy is renewed in theirs. See ! where the whole group come out into the garden ; and the little ones, exulting, gather up the red-streak apples, which the father shakes from the lofty tree ; with sparkling eyes, they hold up the fruit to their smiling mother. Here is the summer of human life ; it is a delightful spectacle.

Happy Britain ! if thy habitations were all such as this ! When the day begins,

the cheerful song of praise arises to heaven, —the Book of God is made audible, — the family bow together at the mercy-seat; and the ardent prayer reaches even to the throne of the Most High. As it revolves, each personal, and each relative duty is diligently discharged. Time passes over them with a silken wing. Peace, and love, and joy, reign here. As the tranquil evening closes, the hallowed Volume is again brought forth; and the grateful orison, more fragrant than precious incense, is addressed to the Great Eternal.

O come the day, long-desired, and long-prayed for,—when the Almighty Shepherd shall assume his great power, shall gather his scattered flock, and reign the beneficent sovereign of the whole family of man! Then, shall every palace, and every cottage, be, alike, a temple to his praise.

Then, nation shall no more rise against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; swords shall be beat into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks. O dawn, thou more than golden era, on a benighted world !

Then, shall "the wolf take up his abode with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together,—and a little child shall lead them. And the suckling shall play on the hole of the aspic; and upon the den of the basilisk shall the newly-weaned child lay his hand. They shall not hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." *

* Lowth's Translation of Isaiah.

AUTUMN.

L

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I.

REAPING

No,—I am not in a fatherless world ; this beautiful field of corn displays the bountiful Providence of the Most High. Every waving ear tells me that there is a God,—and that his tender mercies are over all his works.

When the keen frosts of winter cut off the green leaf, and the little blade of corn was but young and delicate, and just peeping out of the ground, He sent his snows to nourish it, and to preserve it from the chilling blasts.

Multitudes of insects and animals have lived here among the golden grain ; here,

the heavy torrents of rain have fallen ; and the rough tempest has exhausted all its rage ; yet, the little ravagers have not devoured the precious fruit,—the showers have not destroyed it,—nor have the impetuous winds swept it away. And why ? because the inestimable treasure has been shielded by the Almighty Benefactor.

Hark ! what harsh sounds are those which break on the ear. They are from the boy sitting on yonder gate with his clappers. He is driving the birds away from the ripe corn. They know him, and are scarcely alarmed, they are so much used to his noise. The little plunderers only fly up from one place, to settle again on another, a little farther onward.

See, where the reapers come ! They gaze with pleasure on the yellow field.

They thrust in the sharp sickle. The beautiful ears, bending with the weight of their rich treasure, are fully ripe.

They cast away the worthless weeds ; but they bind up the precious grain into sheaves ; they set them up in the warm sun, that they may be dried, and made ready to be laid up against the coming winter.

How diligently they labour ; the day is fine, and they carefully improve its fleeting hours ; they know not but that the rains may descend on the morrow.

The little gleaners follow them closely ; they pick up the scattered ears, and tie them in the neat handful. The pretty infant, who cannot make his way through the hard stubble, sits down on the sheaf.

A few months ago, when I passed by the field, the husbandman was sowing the good

seed. How large is the increase! God has given to him a hundred fold more than he threw into the bosom of the earth.

But shall I gaze on the scene, and see nothing more than the corn, and the reapers, and the little gleaners? No, — I will muse on his munificence, who is the God of harvests. Truly, his rains descend on the evil, and on the good, and his cheering light arises on the thankful, and on the unthankful.

I will learn to seize the sun-shiny hours of youth and health. O how many of them have I misimproved, and loitered away! I will awake to industry, and to the call of Heaven. I will climb the hill of science. I will strive each day to make some addition to my knowledge. I will endeavour zealously to advance in every thing which will please God, — in every

thing which will render me a blessing to my friends, and useful to society.

I will recollect, —that the worthless tares are not bound up with the invaluable grain; the one are cast away, whilst the other is carefully preserved. So,—at the judgment day,—the wicked shall be severed from the righteous; — they shall not be found with them any more for ever.

I will think,—that though the hail, and the rain, and the tempests beat on the field, yet the corn was uninjured;—it grew higher and higher,—it came into ear,—and it blossomed and ripened; so, — the good man, though oftentimes the storms of adversity and affliction fall heavily upon him, shall not be overwhelmed,—for beneath him is the Almighty arm of his Father and his God. He, too, shall ripen for heavenly felicity, even when the gale rages around

him in its fury, no less than when the bright beams of prosperity are pouring down upon his path.

I will delight to reflect, — that though the grain of corn was cast into the ground, and though it died, and was dissolved, yet it did not long continue in darkness and ruin; — but it arose from its grave, and it was arrayed in loveliness. So, — I must die, — I must be laid in the cold tomb; but it will be only for a little season; soon, I shall rise again, dressed in the beautiful garments of immortality.

II.

FRUIT.

SEE, — where the pretty squirrel sits on the bough, — he is opening the finely-browned bunch of ripe filberts. How quick are his motions. His eyes finely sparkle, as if he were much pleased, that he has found the sweet treasure. He lays up a large hoard in the hollow tree; they furnish him with a supply of food through the inclement weather.

There is no fruit on the bed of strawberry plants. Nor does the cherry tree any longer hold out to us its juicy stores. The raspberries are gathered, and are laid up with care; and the gooseberry bush

presents but a scanty gleanings. They are gone; but they refreshed us through the months of the burning summer.

We need not regret their loss; for the Great Benefactor is crowning the year with his goodness. He is lavishing a profusion of inestimable blessings on a thoughtless world.

Here, the fine large plums, with their luscious sweets, adorn the trees. The insects, and the little birds, have found out those which are most ripe. They have left many proofs how much they love them. They have a right to a share of the fruits of the earth. The good God has given such an abundance, that they have eaten but a small part of the large whole.

There, are the fine apple-trees, heavily laden with the choice fruit. The owner

has propped up some of the boughs, lest they should break from the stem, or hang on the damp ground, and be injured. He walks in his orchard, and smiles; he expects, from the rich juices of his fruit, to fill his exhausted vessels with the refreshing cider.

The large pears lie scattered on the grass; the gentle breeze of the evening brought them from the lofty boughs. They are fully ripe; and the wasp has marked a few of them with his teeth! The well-armed culprit knew that they were the sweetest and the best.

Yonder extensive wall, presenting its aspect to the warm south, is covered with fine-flavoured fruit-trees. There, is the downy peach, and the ruddy nectarine, and the wide-spreading vine, the wealth, and the sustenance of nations. See,—the

gardener is severing the superfluous leaves, that the blushing clusters may be more deeply tinged with the rays of the noon-day sun.

No land,—and no part of any land, is destitute of its valuable fruits. How great is the Divine goodness! How inexhaustible are his riches, who thus perpetually showers down his rich bounty on an ungrateful world!

O man!—this beautiful globe,—yea, all that delights the eye, and which charms the heart, are for thee. They are his munificent gifts, who at first formed, and who every moment sustains thee.

For thee, Spring scatters every where around thy path her blooming flowers; and Summer pours forth her vital heat for thee; and for thee, Autumn ripens her delicious stores.

In the morning, the sun arises to make the day for thee. For thee, in the sweet evening, through the leaves of the shady grove, the soft moon-beams beautifully glide.

The refreshing gale blows,—the grass forms every where over the earth a fine carpet of living green,—and the nightingale pours forth her rich, her varied, her plaintive, her inimitable song, for thee.

The creatures are formed,—they live, they die, for thee. Harvests rise, and ripen, and wave for thee. For thee the crystal spring bubbles up its pure waters; and the silver stream gently winds through the beautiful vale, for thee.

And wilt thou not, O Man! love and serve thy Maker, who supports thee every moment, and who has thus given thee all things richly to enjoy? Wilt thou be

insensible to his perpetual goodness? Or, rather, shall not each season witness thy elevated gratitude? Shall not thy glowing heart meditate the unutterable song? Shall not thy whole existence be vocal with his praise?

III.

HARVEST HOME.

THE day is very fine ; let us walk into the wheat-field ; how abundant is the harvest !—there will be plenty for the poor as well as the rich. How delightful the thought !

Yonder, — the husbandman comes into the field ; he loves to gaze on it. He examines sheaf after sheaf ; he finds that they are dry, and fit to be laid up for the winter.

And see, — the sturdy team is just coming down the lane into the ground. Before the night closes in, the corn will be all safe in the rick, and in the barn.

The bright moon will rise before her accustomed time this evening, to light them in their labours. When the wheat is gathered in from this field, the whole crop will be secure. The village youngsters will mount on the last load; they will make the vale ring with the sweet cry of—HARVEST HOME!

Then they will surround their master's hospitable board. For a little while they will forget all their care. They will tell of their labours, and boast of their might. They have long anticipated this festive evening.

It is a pleasant thought, that the precious grain is all secure;—though the rains may now descend, or the tempest rage,—they will not injure it.

In a very little time, the hopes of the husbandman have been realized; it is not

long since, that the green blade sprang up out of the earth.

Spring and Summer were but transient ; they were soon succeeded by Autumn ; and Autumn will soon give place to the dreary reign, and the howling blasts, of Winter.

Life is but for a short period. Infancy soon passes away,—we then enter on the joyous hours of youth,—manhood, with its cares and its labours, rapidly follows ; then old age, with all its weaknesses, arrives,—and we drop into the tomb.

Man,—the boasted lord of the creation, like the little flower of the field, rises, looks gay, and flourishes ; then droops, decays, and dies,—and soon crumbles into his original dust.

Husbandmen ! forget not, that other feet than yours shall soon brush away the

dews of the morning, — that other hands shall soon gather in the waving crop, — and that another race shall celebrate, on this very spot, the feast of harvest.

This world was not designed for our permanent abode; there is another, and a better state, — the present life is only an entrance into it. Compared with this nobler region, earth's highest grandeur, its most elevated enjoyments, are but vanity.

All below the skies is fluctuating. Creatures, like the waves of the ocean, are one moment here, — and the next, if we seek for them, they are gone. The place we now occupy will soon know us no more for ever.

Let us think of our departure; let us prepare for that delightful world, where there is nothing but joy; and where

change, and sorrow, and conflict, and tears, and death, are unknown. Oh, that, when we have done with all below the skies, we may have an entrance into that happy land!

IV.

HOP AND SAFFRON GROUNDS.

THE morning is beautiful; the fine blue heavens have not a cloud on them. I will go into the corn-fields,—I will gaze on the labourer as he gathers in the remainder of the harvest.

There,—the little robin sits on the damson-tree, by the dairy window. How sweet is his matin song!

See,—what a fine group of children come out of the cottage. They fare hard, but they are blooming in health. They place the infant on the grassy hillock,—they surround the brambles, and gather the blackberries. The elder girl

brings some of the largest to the little babe.

The heath is covered with the rich purple blossoms ; it is one blush of beauty. Here is the pretty bell-flower,* with its slender stalk, and its leaves of different shapes.

Yonder, the Hop Plantations appear luxuriant,—they are just fit to be gathered in. I passed through them in the summer months,—the high poles were covered with their ample verdure. The flowers hung all around them in beautiful clusters, and in gay festoons.

The gathering has commenced,—there are the women, and the little ones, youth, and feeble age, picking them. They take the large pole out of the ground ; joyful they pluck off the light treasure.

* *Campanula rotundifolia*.

Sometime since, there was no harvest in this plantation,—the blight fell on it,—the insect army made it their prey; they devoured the shoots and the leaves.

But now it is abundant. When it is dried, it will be closely bound up to preserve our liquors,—to imbue them with a fine flavour.

What is that, which is so gay in the next enclosure? Though it is the Autumnal season of the year, the spring reigns there. There is a golden harvest of beautiful flowers! And what are they? They are the saffron crocus.* The people are gathering them. Before they come out into full blossom, they take out the stamina, fragrant with the rich orange-

* There are about 200,000 roots to an acre. They blossom for about three weeks in September. The produce of an acre in three years is about twenty-six pounds.

coloured dust ; it tinges the faded vesture with a fine hue. The bright yellow leaves they cast away.

How varied, and how beautiful, are the works of God ! Truly, in wisdom He has made them all. The sparkling heavens, the teeming earth, and the mighty ocean,—yea, the wide universe,—all, all, are full of his glory. Suns, and moons, and stars, and systems of revolving worlds, aloud proclaim it. And so, too, does the little daisy, when it opens its pretty cup, with brim of purple hue, to receive the warm rays of the dewy morning.

V.

SOWING.

THOUGH the harvest is gathered in, yet nature is not altogether at rest; she is preparing in secret for the coming year.

Man also again goes forth to his labours. To replenish the garden and the orchard, the nurseryman plants out his fruit trees; or, he drops the little acorns into the ground, to occupy the waste made by the axe of the woodman.

All ought to labour; nothing of any worth can be procured without it. Idle people never come to any good. They cannot be happy in themselves, and they are of no service to their fellow creatures.

A single glance will tell you which is the vineyard of the slothful. It is covered with the noxious thorn and the thistle. The hand of the diligent, and this alone, maketh rich.

Now, again, the peasant goes forth with the useful plough; he turns up the rugged soil. The rough harrow follows, and breaks it into pieces.

See, where the sower comes, and casts the precious seed into the bosom of the fruitful earth. He does so, in hope, that the next season he shall see his fields smiling with the joyful harvest.

And this will be the case. God has said, in the covenant which He has made with man, that it shall be so. "Seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night," He has assured us, shall know their place,

and shall not cease. Nor can his Almighty word fail. Sooner shall the heavens and the earth pass away.

Yes, He will give the ground a charge to nourish the seed ; his dews shall refresh it ; his rains shall water it, and make it grow ; and his sunshine shall ripen it.

Forget not, O man ! whilst thou art providing for thy future wants, forget not, that each day, and each hour, thou, too, art sowing for eternity.

Think not, if thou dost sow the worthless tares, that thou shalt reap wheat ; the hope is vain,—thou shalt not. The harvest thou shalt reap will assuredly resemble the seed which thou art sowing. Thy thoughts, and words, and actions, are forming a character, which will render thee happy or miserable for ever. Solemn consideration !

Then I will watch over my thoughts ; they are all known to God. They are the seeds, whence arise good or evil words, or good or evil actions.

How much of life, in which I might have sown the good seed, have I trifled away ! How many talents have I, which I have but ill-improved ! I have too often wandered from my Father, who is in Heaven !

But I will arise and go to Him. I will humbly supplicate his forgiving love. Fathomless and immeasurable are his compassions. Substantial felicity exists nowhere but in his smiles. I will ask Him, though I am unworthy, for his Son's sake, to bestow on me the inestimable boon.

VI.

GENERAL APPEARANCES IN AUTUMN.

I WILL walk through the fields, though they are rugged and barren. The precious fruits of the earth are all borne away ; and the dry stubble only remains. The landscape mourns, and is desolate.

The pretty songsters are silent ; they perceive that the cold blasts are coming ; they conceal themselves among the low underwood ; or, they associate in flocks, and roam from field to field.

The sweet lark no longer soars to meet the rising sun ; she is afraid to venture far from the ground. The rooks return from

the fields in the dewy evening. They pass not the night from their high chambers.

The fragrance from the bean-field no more delights the smell. Scarcely does a little flower bloom, even in the garden. The beautiful garment, which adorned creation, is faded, and gone to decay.

Yet the fern blossoms beneath its leaf; and the deep-green ivy, ever-verdant. The thread-moss runs along the ruined wall, and the lichen creeps over the thatch of the old barn.

See, where the herd of swine are busy under the wide-spreading oak-tree. The boy, in his white frock and slouched hat, has climbed up into it; with his long staff, he is beating down the fine acorns from the high branches.

The red-hip, the fruit of the wild rose,

and the haw, adorn the hedge-rows; and the purple sloe blushes among the yellow leaves.

The glory of the woodlands is faded, — the fresh greenness of the leaves is departed; now, they are of every hue, yet are their tints beautiful. I love to gaze on them; they enrich the landscape; yet they fill the mind with pensive thought; for they say, — Winter is about to resume his dreary reign.

The gale of the morning is chilling; often, the dark clouds are spread over the heavens; and the damp mists, and the fogs, ere the star of evening rises, envelope creation.

Yet is the day oftentimes bright with the mild lustre of the Autumnal sun-beams. And the sportsman goes forth, — the little spaniel is with him, — he is delighted to

accompany his master. He enters the stubble, and searches busily on every side, — there, — he moves gently, — he creeps imperceptibly along, — he falls flat on the ground, — he knows that the covey is near, — he waits for his master, — the gun is levelled, — the birds rise, — they fly swiftly, and with strong wing, through the air, — but they escape not the murderous shot, — their beautiful plumage is stained with their blood.

But the sun is setting, and the evening approaches. The vapours are gathering around the horizon. I will not go any farther. I will walk homewards over the heath, and through the furze-field. I will take shelter in my little cottage at the foot of the high mountain.

But what is that which avoids me with so swift a foot? It is the timid hare; I

have disturbed her, and she has fled from her form in the long grass. But she stops; she lifts up her ears, to learn whether any one follows her.

Pretty creature! Do not fear. I will go a little way round out of the path. Come back to thy warm abode. I have nothing to harm thee with; I never bear the cruel weapon that wounds thee. I would not ruffle, to pain thee, a single hair of thy furry garment. I delight to see the creatures happy.

VII.

GOSSAMER.—MIGRATION OF BIRDS.

It is a perfect calm. Scarcely does a leaf tremble on the aspen-tree. A thin mist only covers the field; the sun-beams are breaking their way through it. It will be all scattered in a very little while.

I will go out and breathe the fresh air of the morning. I will walk along the serpentine path which winds round the hill. I will rise to its summit, and offer the song of praise to my Great Preserver. I will humbly supplicate his blessing through the day.

But what is this? The ground is covered with innumerable threads; in every

direction they cross my path ; they extend from twig to twig, from bush to bush, and from one blade of grass to another. They seem to be floating all around in the air. The fields, and the shrubs, are overspread with net-work, inimitably fine.

It is all spun by the little gossamer. An immense multitude of them must have laboured in the work. They are carried through the air, buoyant, as long as they please ; then they coil up their thin line, and descend to the ground. Their fine meshes cover the face of nature. The dew-drops hang on them plentifully ; and how prettily they glitter in the sweet sunbeams.

What a flock of birds are settling on the ridge of yonder barn,—they are swallows ; they are all twittering ; they must have

come from some distance around in the country, it is a pretty sight.

But how is this? Did they send one to another, and agree to come together? Did they foresee, that the winter was coming, and that there would be no food for them here? And have they determined to go to the mild southern clime, where there will be more warmth, and plenty of provision?

But the air is now mild, and the days are still often very fine; and the little insects are not all gone; might they not yet stay with us for a season?

Perhaps they might; but this is very uncertain. A wisdom which never errs, has bid them depart early, before the cold frosts make the air keen. These would cramp them in their long flight.

There!—how they all fly off together!

—round, and round, and round! Now they settle again;—now again they take their flight. Perhaps, they are trying their wings; or, are the old ones teaching their young how best to sustain the length of their journey?

But why do they not go away a few at a time? Why do they all set off together? Who has told them, that the winter is coming, and that there will be no food for them here? And who has assured them, that they will find sustenance, and warmer gales, in the southern clime? And how is it that they can find the way?

I cannot tell;—the works of God are, like Himself, unsearchable. It is delightful to read the great volume of creation, though some of its pages are above our comprehension. No doubt but that He who made them bids them depart. It is

He who alone can sustain them in their flight, and direct their course.

And does He deign to guide the birds of the air? Yes; not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him. Will He not, then, direct thee, O helpless child of man? He will: put thy trust under the shadow of his wings.

A moment will come, when I, too, must leave my native land, and all that is dear to me. Then the grateful tears shall sparkle in my eyes, whilst I lift them to Him who has revealed a better country: then I will say, Thither I come, O my Father, and O my God! Already, at Thy bidding, do the bright beams of immortal day break around me. Oh, sustain my departing spirit! Guide it in its flight to the land where I shall behold Thee as Thou art, and where I shall be happy for ever!

VIII.

THANKSGIVING.

THE sun is pouring his last rays over a world full of his Creator's bounty.

I will roam through the vale. Not long since, it was overspread with the precious grain. There, the golden harvest, as in grateful homage, waved before Him.

Evening, peaceful evening, is about to resume her gentle reign. See, she is adorning the vast expanse with her beautiful gems.

Though no human eye is upon me, I am not alone. The happy ministering spirits are near. I will exult in the thought. They move swiftly, but with silent wing,

among the works of God. I will join them in their praise.

All his creatures should praise Him ; for He called them into existence out of nothing ; and He, too, sustains them every moment.

He is the great source of every blessing, —there is no good in the wide universe which did not come from Him.

The harvest should praise Him ; his rain and his earth,—his dews and his sunbeams have ripened it. The seed sprang, and the green blade flourished, and the full ear lifted up its beautiful head, at his bidding.

The flocks and the herds should praise him, for He created them ; and He covered the pastures with the sweet grass for their sustenance.

The vegetables of the garden, and the fruits of the orchard, are from Him. The

juicy apple and the sweet pear, the ruddy nectarine, the downy peach, and the charming clusters of the vine, all, all speak aloud of his goodness.

The springs, and the rivers, and the waters of the mighty ocean, should praise Him, for they are his.

Every little bird which flies through the air was formed, and is guided by his hand, and should praise Him. The melody of every song which echoes through the vast creation, is his.

Spring, with her innumerable flowers and blossoms, should praise Him. The luxuriance, and the beauty, which adorns the hills and the vales, the fields and the plains, is his.

Autumn, crowned with the yellow wheat-sheaf, should praise Him. Let her

bring it into his sanctuary ; and let her wave it, with the voice of thanksgiving, before his hallowed shrine.

We ought to praise Him, though the fig-tree should not blossom, or bring forth its luscious fruit ; though the vine should not yield to us its purple clusters ; though the verdure of the fields should be withered ; though the corn should be blasted by the mildews ; though the flocks should be cut off from the fold, and the herds perish in the stall. Yes, even then we ought to praise Him ;—and to hope in his mercy, which endureth for ever.

But how greatly should we praise Him, now He has crowned the year with his goodness ;—now He has clothed the pastures with flocks ; has covered the fields with the yellow corn ;—now He has made

the valleys shout for joy ; and has opened his beneficent hand, satisfying the desires of every living thing.

I will praise Him, though I know not how to do it aright ; though I have no words which are sufficient to tell of his glory. Too poor, and too low, are my highest notes, for the infinite theme. "I will revere Him, then, in the stillness of the soul." My meditation of Him shall be sweet. The gratitude for which there is no language reaches even to his throne, —it is heard by Him,—and it is pleasant to his ear.

IX.

THE FALLEN LEAVES.

THE pastures, so lately beautiful, have lost their charms, and are forsaken. The cattle are sheltered in the warm homestall.

The flock is gathered in from the wide downs; they are shut up in the warm fold; and are fed with the sweet turnips, and from the fragrant hay-stack.

The hives are removed under the shed. No more do the bees venture abroad into the garden or the field. They subsist on the sweet store which they gathered in the summer.

The keen frost has driven the sap to the root of the tree; there is no nourishment

for the leaves; they have all withered; and nearly the whole of them have fallen from the high branches.

They did not wither and fall all at once. No. This would have been a great shock to our feelings. Those of the walnut-tree first changed their hue; then the mulberry, and the chestnut, and the sycamore, and the ash. Lately, the elm shed its leafy honours; now, those of the oak, and of the beech, are falling to the ground. All the glory of the forest will be shortly departed.

But when the wintry blasts are gone, Spring shall again array them in their fine verdure.

So it is with man; one generation passes away; but another arises, and occupies its place.

But man is not as the oak, that proudly

lifts its head: and which, through successive ages, defies the fury of the storm: no, he is only as the little leaf, which, for a short time, looks beautiful, and then withers, decays, falls, and mingles with the earth from whence it came.

Many of the leaves are torn off from the boughs by the cattle, when they are but just come out from the bud. So, the lovely infant just opens his eyes on this vale of woe, pours the tears of sorrow down its pretty cheek, and expires.

Some hang on the branch a little longer. They are cropped in all their freshness and beauty. So, the sweet youth is torn from the parent stem: she who bare him, is heard weeping, and refuses to be comforted.

Others remain on the tree till they are grown to maturity; and then the fierce

tempest tears them away. So, the young man,—the joy, the hope of his fond father, enters on life; the strength of his frame seems to say, that it is formed for many years. But, lo! he sickens,—he droops,—he reclines on the low couch,—he expires. The place which knew him, knows him no more. His vigorous sun is gone down at noon.

But none of the leaves have flourished long. It is but a little while, that they have been in existence. So, man is as the leaf,—it is only for a short period that any of our race exult in the light of the sun.

Is there any one who can raise the fallen leaf? Who can restore it to the branch, and imbue it with its fine lustre? There is no one. Never does the spring revisit the withered verdure. Man, then, is not as the leaf; — there is One whose arm is

almighty, who can, and who has declared that He will raise him from the dust. His name is Jesus; He is the Son of God. All who believe on Him, shall one day hear his all-animating voice calling them from the tomb. They shall obey his voice; and flourish in immortal youth, in the heavenly paradise; there, beneath the luxuriant branches of the tree of life, whose beautiful leaf fades not, and whose delicious fruits nourish and enrich the immortal mind for ever, shall he take up his abode in undecaying mansions.

X.

THE AUTUMN OF HUMAN LIFE.

THE hoar-frost has spread its silvery covering on all around. It is very beautiful. It reminds us of the rapid decline of the year.

The days are much shorter. The hours of twilight and darkness are greatly increased. We should be concerned to improve them.

The leaves are almost all fallen. The early storms of winter are changing them into fine earth. They will nourish the roots of the trees, on which they so lately grew. The Autumnal season is closing rapidly around us.

But has not human life its autumn, as well as the landscape around us? It has. Let us contemplate it.

Dost thou see that farm-house, sheltered by the thick wood? There,—where there are many stacks of hay and corn in the rick-yard.

We will walk towards it; the labourers are now giving the cattle their morning meal. Perhaps we may see the owner of the farm; he is in the declining period of his days.

He has laboured hard; he has brought up a large family; most of them are grown up; some of them are in the summer of their days. They often remind him of what he was when he was young.

His countenance is faded; it has lost its sprightliness; anxious care has somewhat wrinkled it.

Once he could hold the plough, or use the scythe, or the sickle, through the long sunny days, and return home unwearied to his couch : but now his strength fails him.

He now walks with a steady, sober pace; but once he touched the ground with a light foot. The stile, or the mound, or the gate, impeded not his course ; he leaped over them with agile limb.

In the race, or with the ball, few equalled, but none excelled him. But closed are the days of his achievements.

In the spring of life, his hair was of the fine auburn, and there was much of it ; but now it is turning grey, and but little is left upon his brow.

When the cold blasts howled around him, oft was he seen arrayed in a scanty garb ; he was warm with active labour ; but now he is clad in the fleecy garments.

Once, his head never ached, nor was his

arm ever tired. He was a stranger to affliction. Pain has now often visited his chamber; often has she laid him on the low couch; and many times has she put the unsavoury cup of medicine into his hands.

His eyes begin to fail him. The Bible, which is in large characters, but seldom read in the years which are past, is now useful to him. It is taken down from the high shelf, and drawn out of its covering of green baize.

See!—here he comes: he used to rise with the bird of the early dawn. With her he hailed the sun, long ere his first beams peeped over the high mountain; but as life advances, he needs more repose.

Mark how he stoops; like the golden ear of harvest. It was not so always; once, he was straight as the arrow; or, as

the tree, whose leaves tremble at the least breeze.

But the days of his glory are gone. He is entering on the years, of which he will say, "I have no pleasure in them!"

Should I be spared through the spring, and the summer of life, I, too, shall be like him. Whilst, then, health and strength are continued, I will gain a store of useful knowledge. I will prepare for the days of gloom and of sickness. I will lay up in my memory and heart, the sweet truths of the Book of Heaven. Then, should my eyes fail me, I can meditate on them. And though the light of the sun may not rise on me, the far brighter rays of God's countenance shall shine on my fainting spirit; and I shall hail them as the blessed and glorious dawn of the eternal day.

W I N T E R.

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I.

TEMPESTS.

THE gloomy day is gone,—the storms and the rains have passed away with it: God has spoken, and there is a great calm.

No bright rays of the sun have been visible. One vast cloud has enwrapped the circle of the heavens.

The rain has fallen in torrents; and the howling of the tempest has been terrible.

The violence of the billows has beat down the massy wall which resisted their fury,—it has torn up the wide and strong pier. The lowlands are covered with the waters. See, where yonder cottage is surrounded with the flood; lo! its owner

rows over the highway ; he comes to seek bread for his children.

Several vessels have been dashed to pieces on the distant rocks ; their very sails are rent into shreds ; the crowd along the coast are gathering up portions of the scattered wrecks.

The high elms in the park, the pride of the avenue, which have stood the blasts of ages, lie prostrate on the ground ; the furious winds have levelled them.

He whom the seas, and the tempests obey, is alone worthy of all confidence, homage, and love. None can thunder with a voice like his. He holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand. No arm can contend with his. Powerless, before Him, as the new-born babe, is the proudest and the mightiest rebel.

I will not forget, that wisdom distin-



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guishes all the works of the Most High. The hurricane of winter is, doubtless, as necessary as the gentle gale of summer. The mountainous waves, and the fierce storm, do but rage at his bidding, and fulfil his Almighty word.

The wintry rains supply the springs, which, through the hot summer, pour the cooling waters along the fruitful meadows. The thick cloud, though it intercepts the sunbeams, is full of blessings. The winds convey them over the wide creation.

The poisonous vapours filled the atmosphere; they would have spread pestilence and death among the works of God; but the howling blasts have scattered and destroyed them.

So in the moral world, afflictions are as necessary as health,—and pain, as enjoyment; they are the appointments of infi-

nite wisdom. At his bidding, they come and depart ; they obey no voice but his.

God is the great giver of every blessing. Should the sunbeams of prosperity always adorn our path, we should become self-sufficient, and forget God. He sends us sickness, to convince us that He alone is the giver of health ; and to remind us of our obligations to our adorable Benefactor.

I will seek his favour,—I will bless Him for the winter, as well as for the summer ; I will thank Him for the storm, as well as for the calm. I will put my trust in Him. Amidst the enlivening gale of Spring, I will rejoice in Him. And when the tempest rages in its fury,—when his awful thunders roar, and his vivid lightnings flash through the wide creation,—I will smile,—and exult, that I am shielded in the hollow of his hand.

II.

WINTER, THE SABBATH OF THE YEAR.

MAN could not always labour; he would sink beneath the weight of perpetual toil.

Sweet to the peasant is the calm evening, when he returns to his peaceful cottage, and throws his weary limbs on his hard couch : to him it is not hard.

Delightful is the sabbath, when he sits down in the bosom of his smiling family ; when he takes his little ones, clad in their Sunday attire, to the sanctuary, to learn the will of God, and to offer the grateful hymn of praise. Pleasant to the poor man, especially, is the light of the sun, which illumines the hallowed day of rest.

The earth, too, has its sabbath ; she is keeping it at this moment. She laboured through the spring, and the summer, and the autumn. She brought forth a profusion of beautiful flowers, and grass for the cattle, and herbs, and delicious fruits, for the service of human kind : and though she is now at rest, she is not wholly inactive ; she is preparing, in secret, to pour forth an abundance of new treasures ; already the corn lifts its green blade from the soil ; it is the sweet pledge of the future harvest.

The days have become shorter ; the cold has imperceptibly increased. The earth is so hard, that the ploughshare will not break it up ; yet the husbandman is not idle. His team draws out the manure to enrich the fallow ground.

The peasant severs the superfluous

branches from the trees, or he cuts them down for timber; he now repairs some of the breaches of his mounds.

The barn resounds with the constantly returning thumps of the flail; the corn is beat out from the husk; the fan separates it from the chaff; it is drawn to the neighbouring market.

The cattle can now procure nothing in the fields; they stay in the yard, covered with the warm stubble: each morning and each evening they make a sweet meal from the fresh barley-straw.

The little birds, of almost every kind, are picking among the fowls at the barn-door. They have lost their sprightliness. Many of them droop their wings, and not one of them pours forth the sweet song.

Nature languishes; it has lost its verdure, save where the holly-bush looks gay

with its red berries, and its glossy leaves of evergreen.

But there,—the little ivy retains its beauty,—the cold withers not its leaf;—it creeps over yonder ruined tower, and clothes it, as with a fine garment; it adheres to it so fast, that the tempest moves it not from its hold.

And here, the yew-tree rises like a pyramid; and the laurel, with its shining leaves, stretches out its fine branches; and the lowly box is pretty and verdant around the borders.

But the garden, which in the spring and autumn are so attractive, has lost its loveliness. The delicious flowers are removed into the greenhouse. There is the myrtle, with its elegant leaf, ever verdant; and the geranium, and the orange, and flowers of every fragrance, and of every hue.

There, though the frosts bind up the ground, and the winds howl over the landscape, they look through their glassy shield, and smile at the storm.

Such is the good man ; though the wintry blasts beat on him fiercely, serenely he lifts his head above them all. The richest dews of heaven abide upon his branches ; his leaf does not wither, nor does he cease from yielding fruit. The arm of the Almighty, as an impenetrable shield, perpetually surrounds him.

III.

FROST AND SNOW.

THE great God waters the earth, and the plants, and the trees, which his hand has formed: He does it in various ways. By the thick mists, by the gentle dews, and by the snow, as well as by the rain.

Now the light vapours congeal in the heavens,—they come down in white flakes,—the drops, which in summer fall from the clouds, and cool and refresh the plants, in winter are scattered like the soft wool; they cover and shield creation from the inclement blasts.

The cattle are all gone under the shed; the fowls have taken shelter under the

large porch ; some of them have already returned to the warm roost.

Let us catch a few of the flakes on this paper,—see, they are formed with great beauty, they are in the shape of little stars.

The youth are just come out of school, and are delighted with the day. In sport, they throw the soft snow-ball at each other. Many of them are making a vast hillock of the fleecy moisture.

Every object is covered with the snow, as with a mantle beautifully white,—it is very deep on the ground. The weight of it has broken off some large branches of the fir-trees.

The snow will manure the ground, and nourish the plants, and the wheat. In this cold season, though man does not think of

it, the good God is secretly preparing for his comfort and prosperity.

Vegetation is not altogether at a stand, though nothing appears to grow. The fir, and the pine-tree, which make masts for the vessels, and flooring for our habitations,—the sweet-smelling cedar, and the hard box-tree, flourish even in the wintry season.

Though the fleecy robe spreads over the face of nature, yet many a little flower is alive beneath. There are the pretty snow-drop, the single anemone, the early hellebore, the winter narcissus, and the delicate mosses.

The grass plants are safely concealed under the ground, they are waiting for the warm gales of the spring ; then, again, every where, the fresh blade will lift up its green head.

But where, in this cold season, are the leaves, and the flowers of the trees? Not one of them is to be seen. God has taken care of them. They are wrapped up in the little buds,—there, with more than human skill, they are folded together; there, in miniature, are all the sweet blossoms, and leaves, and stems, and fruit. They are secure from the cold and the frost. Those of the chestnut, the sycamore, and the lime-tree, are preserved with a covering of shining gum.

Every where, and in every season, O thou Great Preserver, I see Thy beneficent hand. Thou hast made summer and winter. Thou hast spread out the heavens like a curtain. The beams of Thy chambers are in the mighty waters. The majestic clouds are Thy chariots; Thou dost walk on the swift wings of the wind.

The earth, by Thee, is hung upon nothing.
Thou dost bind up the waters in the thick
cloud, and it is not rent under them. Thou
dost say to the small rain, and to the great
rain of thy strength, and to the snow, Be
ye on the earth ! and they obey Thy voice.
Thou art God, and there is none else.

IV.

CATTLE, AND BIRDS, IN WINTER.

STILL the air is keen, — and the mountain is covered over with snow ; I cannot climb it ; the pathway is buried so deep. I will walk through the village ; and go along the road through the plantation, which has been cleared by the labourers.

But where is the animated creation ? Providence has not been unmindful of them. The little dormouse, and others, are gone to sleep, — they will have one long night, and be awakened by the warm gales, and the enlivening beams of the Spring.

The pretty squirrel is in his hollow tree,

in the midst of his rich treasury of nuts. It is but seldom that he ventures to peep out from his little house.

The crafty fox visits the hen-roost, — he makes dreadful havoc ; and he carries away as many as he can to his deep cavern in the forest.

The timid hare approaches the abode of man, — she knows not her danger ; the impress of her footsteps is by the hay-rick, and among the vegetables of the garden.

And see, here, — how the rabbits have torn the bark from the trees in this new plantation. There is scarcely a tree on which they have not left the marks of their teeth. Some of them are made bare as high as they could reach them.

The cattle are fed by the husbandman,

and protected in the warm homestall : the sheep are in the fold, sheltered with the hurdle matted with straw, — and the early lambs are quite shut up within doors.

But where are the feathered tribes? Many are around the barn, or in the warm rick-yard, — or, among the green ivy, — its broad leaves shelter them from the cold, — and its berries afford them food.

God has bade the furs, and the wool of animals, and the feathers of the birds, grow thicker and warmer in the wintry season, to shield them from its cold.

Then there is the pretty robin, — he flies into the kitchen and the dairy, — and he visits the warm bed-room, when he can get admission through the window.

O I love to see him hop about, and pick up the crumbs, and dress his ruffled

plumage ; and then sit on the ledge of the casement, and pour forth his song of gratitude and joy.

There is no season which revolves, — there is no spot in the wide universe, in which God does not display his kind care of his creatures.

V.

RIVER FROZEN.

BEAUTIFULLY is the frost displayed on the windows ; the threads of ice which were first formed, have expanded into feathers, and flowers, and leaves.

The cold is severe,—it has bound every thing in its strong chains.

The wide lake is changed in its aspect ; its surface is no more of the liquid wave ; it presents a firm pavement of white marble.

The river is stopped in its course ; it has become like the solid glass ; its current is far beneath the surface.

The sound of the water-fall now no

longer breaks upon the ear ; where the torrent descended, there are columns of bright icicles ; and ice in every fantastic form.

A multitude have come out to the river ; how rapidly they skait over the smooth surface ! It is a delightful exercise.

See,—where the youth glide along in swift succession. They are glad that it is winter ; they feel not the intense cold ; they have not a single care ; their young bosoms glow with animation and enjoyment.

But how many are there who are not like these ; they shrink beneath the cold, the wintry blast. Now is the season to extend to them the hand of benevolence. O thou who hast a comfortable habitation, think, with pity, of him who retires into the miserable hut, trembling before the blast.

Dost thou repose on a bed of down?
O consider how many there are, who
wrap themselves in a pallet of straw, un-
pitied and unknown.

Art thou covered with a sufficiency of
rich clothing to shield thee from the in-
clemency of the season? Forget not, that
there are multitudes who have but little
to keep them warm, by day or by night.

Is thy table spread with delicious fare?
O send a pittance to the cottage, where
the children are asking for bread, and there
is none to give them.

Does thy countenance bloom with health
and vigour? Perhaps, near thee, is some
one pining in hopeless sickness, and in the
depth of wretchedness; wilt thou not
visit, wilt thou not help him?

Art thou in the spring, or in the sum-
mer of thy days? And art thou gay, and

prosperous, and happy? Think of yonder widow; old, and in want, and in misery. She has seen brighter days; she has been even as you.

Withhold not succour from the wretched, thou, who hast it in thy hand to bestow. Think of the goodness of God to thee; He has blessed thee, and thou shouldest be a blessing. Think of Him, who went about doing good. Do as thou wouldest be done unto.

Hast thou very much of this world's good? Does thine eye survey large possessions, and dost thou call them by thy own name? Think,—they are only thine for a short period. Thou art but as a steward. Reflect,—in a little time, God will call thee to give an account of thy stewardship.

VI.

WINTER EVENING'S FIRE-SIDE.

THE season is gloomy ; but it is not without its enjoyments.

How comfortable is the cheerful fire. Let us kindle the tapers, and draw around it.

We should be thankful for light and heat ; without them, those chilling evenings would be very dreary. But now, sweet is the winter's eve, when the shutters are closed on the storm, and the family meet together in the social circle.

Delightful is the intercourse where love and friendship reign. It is a little paradise on earth.

How charming is the converse ! How instructive, how familiar !—seriousness blends with cheerfulness, and gravity with wit.

Oft the fair one delightfully touches the sweet instrument ; and with a sweeter voice she accompanies the delicious music. Amidst the harsh storms of the winter, she creates the soft melody of the spring.

Or, the much-loved youth, makes vocal Cowper's instructive page ; or His majestic verse, who sang of man's first disobedience,—borne on the more than eagle pinion of his enraptured muse, the mind soars sublimely, “ beyond this visible diurnal sphere !”

Or, in imagination, they leave their native land ;—they voyage, without fear or peril, to foreign climes ;—they go from region to region, from ocean to ocean,—they survey, they examine, the mighty globe.

Or, past ages are brought up from oblivion. The generous, and the mean,—the mighty, and the feeble,—the coward, and the brave,—the vanquished, and the victor,—the virtuous, and the wicked,—rise, led on by the Genius of History, and pass in review before the mental vision.

Or, Philosophy unfolds her interesting pages, and conducts them through the wide earth, and the brilliant firmament,—from planet to planet, from star to star, from sun to sun, from system to system. She directs their attention to the useful inventions of man,—and then fixes their astonished gaze on the inimitable wonders of the Almighty hand.

Or, the inestimable volume of Inspiration pours forth the sweet stream of its poetry, and its history. Its hallowed precepts again arrest the attention, and im-

press the heart ; and its glorious doctrines, to their delighted view, open wide the gate to a blessed immortality.

In such scenes, time does not pass on heavily, but with a soft, and a rapid wing ; the mind is refreshed and delighted ; conscience smiles and approves. These are pleasures at once elegant and simple,—and they leave no sting behind.

Sweet evenings, and worthy of immortals ! The gambler's dice, or his balls, or the painted pasteboards, or baby baubles, are not needed here.

Sweet evenings ! I bid you hail ! When ye are gone, the recollection of you is grateful to the memory ; and the thought of your return is refreshing to my spirit.

VII.

THE STARRY HEAVENS.

THE sun has not long since set,—he seemed shorn of his bright rays,—he looked like an immense globe of solid fire.

Now the heavens are covered with beautiful stars,—and they shine with exquisite brightness. The skies are adorned as with gems of incomparable glory.

A few of them travel round the sun, like the earth on which I tread. They, too, no doubt, are worlds like ours ; some of them are smaller ; but there are others which are much larger than the planet on which we live.

They appear scattered in confusion over the vast expanse, — but it is not so, — they are arranged in the most perfect order. Every little star has an appointed course, — which it never forsakes. No one star is ever in the way of another.

Glancing through the midst of the firmament, I see a bright belt studded with stars; it is the Milky Way. And though the orbs seem to be near to each other, — it is not so; they are a great way apart. We are now millions of miles nearer to them than we were in the summer, yet are they still but as brilliant points to the eye.

Every one of them, diminutive as it seems, is a sun shining with its own light; and, doubtless, systems of worlds roll in majesty around them.

Should we try to count them, we should

be unable. If we could number those which are visible to our eyes, or which we can see with our glasses,—still, these would be but a small part of the mighty whole.

If I could rise from one bright orb to another, till I reached the remotest which my eyes can discover,—then I should find new heavens,—there, I should behold new suns pouring forth their glory ; and new systems of worlds would be seen revolving around them. No one can tell, where the works of God begin, and where they end ?

How amazing, that these mighty orbs, should hang in the thin air ; that they should revolve through the heavens with such swiftness. There must be some power which holds them up ; and which rolls them along in their inconceivably

rapid but silent course. It is his who formed them ; it is the hand of Omnipotence.

If a little star were taken from the milky way, and it should never shine there any more, no one on earth would know that it was gone. If the vast globe on which I live should be annihilated, it would scarcely be missed among the boundless works of the Most High. Who could tell that any one had taken away a grain of sand from the sea shore ?

I will delight to reflect, that there are innumerable worlds, and beings, perhaps, countless as the rays of light which beautify creation, who delight to praise the adorable Creator. I will rejoice to think, that the grateful hymn rises to his throne from all the works of his hands. My feeble accents shall join the general anthem of thanksgiving.

O that I could form suitable conceptions of the divine grandeur! But it is unsearchable. There are no bounds to the glory of God. Neither man or angel can find out the Almighty to perfection.

And I, amidst so many suns, and stars, and systems of worlds,—what am I, but as the little insect which creeps upon the ground? Yet am I a nobler creature than the sun,—he knows not that he exists,—he knows not his own greatness and beauty,—he knows not God, who bade him shine. But I know Him,—and I love Him,—and I can lift my voice to Him, and He will hear me,—and, inconsiderable and unworthy as I am, He assures me, in his holy word, that a day will come, when He will own me as his child, and take me to live in his presence for ever.

VIII.

THE THAW.

THE hard frost has held creation bound as in massy chains,—and the snows have buried every object deep beneath its warm flakes.

Now,—ye who boast of your might, come forth! Bring with you the millions of the creatures,—take away the ice from the rivers, and the fleecy covering from the face of nature.

But ye cannot,—the work is too vast,—your utmost efforts would be in vain. There is One Being, and only One, who can do what He pleases, at all times, and in all worlds.

He has bade the southern gales blow,—

they have brought on their wings the warm showers. At once, the icy fetters which enchained the world are broken into pieces.

I will go up to the lofty window, and look down the long valley,—I will mark the current of the stream.

How the little brook, which runs through the village, is swollen! How unlike what it is in summer! It has spread its waters over the highway.

A short time since the village throng were sporting on the white marble which covered the river,—now it is broken into pieces,—and the fierce torrent bears them away.

The cataracts pour down from the lofty hills,—the impetuous waters break from their channel,—they deluge the fields all around.

And where is the river? I see it not;

it is lost in the wide-spreading flood. Where is the hay-stack which stood upon its margin? It is borne away. And the bridge, which extended from one shore to the other, is broken down; the powerful current has dashed it to pieces.

There is the solitary cottage of the herdsman, by the large branching elms; it is surrounded with water; the thatch and the upper casement alone are visible. The father has borne his little ones to the neighbouring hill. See, there, too, is the mother, with her affrighted babe, clinging fast to her fond bosom. They have but just escaped, with their lives, from their lowly dwelling.

The snow is already gone. There is but little, here and there, in the sheltered places. The mighty mountain, which no human efforts could have re-

moved, has dissolved before the breath of heaven.

Nothing is too hard for the Most High. When I have no hope in the creature, and at all times, I will hope in Him. When darkness surrounds my path, and I see not his footsteps, I will confide in his mercy, —and I will expect the cheering light of returning day. I will never despair of help from God.

Transient, as the melting snows, are all the pleasures of this vain world. They glitter, and attract our attention for a season, —but they satisfy us not, and they soon vanish away.

I will lift up my eyes to the Great Eternal. I will importune for his favour. In his smiles there are joys which abide for ever.

IX.

INTIMATIONS OF SPRING.

THOUGH the storms of winter have lasted long, yet has the mind been cheered with the hope, that the hours of spring would soon dawn around us. And see, the pleasing prospect is realized.

The leaves of the sweet woodbine are expanding, — the charming mezereon is in its glory, — the blossoms of the hazel are unfolding, — and the clusters of primroses peep out beautifully from beneath the thorn.

The flower-buds of the elder are bursting into view ; and the gooseberry and the currant trees are again looking green.

The yellow blossoms are coming out all over the heath. The flowers of the furze will soon be innumerable.

The woodlark pours forth his sweet song; the thrush and the chaffinch add their notes to the melody of the grove,—and the noisy rooks are building their nests in the lofty elms of the avenue.

The little insects come out from their sleeping places, and play under the warm hedge-row,—and the early butterfly, now and then spreads out in the sunbeams his beautiful wings.

The sun rises sooner, and shines longer; and his bright rays are become more powerful.

Shortly, creation will be clad in her gayest and most splendid array; all will be “beauty to the eye, and music to the ear.”

The pretty lambs are already seen in the fold ; they rejoice in the enlivening beams of the sun ; they frolic about the warm bank in artless innocence.

At the noon-tide hour, the industrious bee comes forth, and searches after the honied flower.

Even now, the borders of the garden look gay with the yellow and the purple crocus. The springing grass makes the fields fresh and beautiful ; and the little daisy, and the golden butter-cup, again adorn the rich pasture.

Yet ofttimes the cold blasts return ; and dreary winter seems reluctantly to give up his gloomy reign.

Yet the Spring shall return in its glory ; the sweet hope of it, unlike many which agitate our bosoms, will not disappoint our expectations.

Such is the hope of the good man ; it will not deceive him. When the world, and its glory, shall vanish from before him, he believes that he shall open his eyes on a fairer land, where the landscape does not fade, and where a far sweeter spring shall abide eternally.

X.

THE WINTER OF HUMAN LIFE.

YONDER is an old man; he is in the winter of his days.

His countenance is full of wrinkles;—his eyes fail him; even with his spectacles he can read but little. His head is almost destitute of covering. There are only a few scattered locks left on it; and these are all of a silvery hue.

His teeth are gone—they gradually failed him,—it was not long since that he parted with the last.

He hears not as he once did: he is not conscious of the sweet sounds which tell

us, that Spring is about to dawn on the world in its glory.

He cannot go across the room without his staff. Sometimes, he moves gently from chair to chair, as he did when he was a little infant.

He delights to talk of the days of his youth; and of the dear companions who have long since left him on his lonely pilgrimage.

Though very feeble, and conscious of it too, yet is he oftentimes cheerful and happy. See,—the children of his children are around him. The little darling is on his knee; and the others delight to talk to him. Frequently is he charmed with their infant frolics.

Often he sits through the day, and muses on the years that are past, and which are never to return;—or, he sends

his thoughts forward to the future, in search of a world, where, he trusts, he shall not grow feeble, or old, or die.

A few more revolving days, and the scene will close; he will be gathered to his fathers; the cold grave will receive his weary limbs.

Go, thou who art in the spring, and the bloom of thy days, and ask him now, what he thinks of life? Enquire, whether it appears to him, what you fondly expect it will be to you, a long series of unmingled enjoyments? He will tell thee, that his days have glided away imperceptibly, like the tale that is told, and that man is born to trouble as well as joy.

Ask him, whether he has found the satisfaction he has so eagerly sought after? Whether he has grasped all the felicity on earth which his soul desired? He will

tell thee, that he has not ; and that life, in its best estate, is vanity.

Nor could he do so ; the desires of the human mind are infinite. There is nothing below the skies which can fill them. No one ever knew all which he wished to know. No one ever gained all that he desired to gain. No one was ever so blest that he did not want to be more happy.

There is a world, which is so glorious, that it needs not the light of the sun, or of the moon. In that happy land, there is a city, which has twelve gates, and every gate is a beautiful pearl. Its magnificent wall is adorned with rubies, and all manner of precious stones. The streets and mansions of this incomparable city are of pure gold, which is transparent as glass. There is no night, no sin, no pain, no sorrow, or death in that blessed abode. There,

the servants of God are to live for ever, in elevated society and enjoyment. The splendour of the sun, or the more feeble light of the moon, are not needed there. There, and there alone, shall the infinite desires of the immortal spirit be fully satisfied. There, the ransomed family of Jesus shall see all which they wished to see; and know all which they desired to know; and possess all which they longed to possess; and that, too, through the long period of everlasting ages.

THE END.

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